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Title:
To the workplace and back : a dilemma of professional women in Malaysia

TO THE WORKPLACE AND BACK: A DILEMMA OF PROFESSIONAL WOMEN IN MALAYSIA

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A Dissertation Submitted to the University of Bristol in Accordance with the
Requirements of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the
Faculty of Social Sciences and Law

Department of Sociology

May 2004

Word Count 88,150

Amendments

Page 11	Para 1	Line 9	- delete "not on"
Page 31	Para 4	Line 1	- delete "such a"
Page 212	Para 3	Line 6	- delete the first "higher"

Abstract

The theme of this study is a paradoxical duality. It discusses the paradoxical situations of the home and the work sector, which career women face in life. It then explains the paradoxical paradigms of Malaysia's modernisation and the conservative traditions of the nation. Then finally it examines the paradoxical entity of women in engineering, which female engineers encounter in their careers.

This study attempts to understand the current trend and pattern of women working in professional occupations in Malaysia. It seeks to explore their current situation through the case study of engineers at PetCo, using questionnaires, interviews and participant observations. It also intends to understand the domination of traditional perspectives on women, work and the family.

The main questions of this study relate to women at work, both at home and the workplace in Malaysia. What are women's orientations to work – the workplace or home? How do employed women manage to negotiate their professional life and private life? Consequently, this study explores how cultural traditions and value systems encourage (or discourage) women in participating in the labour force.

The fundamental research hypothesis rests on how most women in the country are adapting to the drive of the country towards industrialisation, yet also are still dealing with the grip of traditional societal expectations. It argues that Malaysia still practices some patriarchal elements that disadvantage women at home and in the workplace.

Acknowledgements

Pray to the Almighty for giving me a continuous happy spirit throughout completing my doctorate degree.

I wish to give special thanks to my supervisors, Professor Harriet Bradley and Dr. Esther Dermott for the benefit of their intelligent minds, as well as sharing constructive advice in the writing of this dissertation. Many thanks also go to Professor Steve Fenton for his professional guidance. *All the three of you are the best supervisors a supervisee could possibly ask for*.

I would also like to extend my gratitude to my colleagues at the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, the International Islamic University, Malaysia, as well as its administrators, for their support and encouragement. Special gratitude goes to the Government of Malaysia for its financial backing. Likewise, I want to show appreciation to everybody at the Department of Sociology, the University of Bristol, especially to my fellow postgraduates in the basement. Room OG4 and its occupants will always be on my mind.

To my parents, parent in-laws and families, I would like to forward my gratitude for their never-ending prayers and support in finishing what I have started, and to achieve what I have hoped in life. And most importantly, to my sweet loving *Hone* for his everlasting love, endless patience, indefinite support, immeasurable assistance and certainly his constant prayers that keep me going. We shall make up for the time that has been wasted in this special long-distance relationship. *One sure thing that I do understand now is that you are not like the general image of the men portrayed in this study*.

Finally, the discussion would not have been complete without the cooperation of the participants and gatekeepers in the course of this study. I shall always be indebted to the time and effort they gave to the research.

Author's Declaration

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the Regulations of the University of Bristol. The work is original, except where indicated by special reference in the text, and no part of the dissertation has been submitted for any other academic award. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author.

Signed: .... Date:... MAY 25th, 2004 ....

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Tables and Charts

Abbreviation

AppChem	-	Applied Chemistry
AppE	-	Applied Engineering
Chem	-	Chemistry
ChemE	-	Chemical Engineering
ChemI	-	Chemistry Industry
CivStrE	-	Civil Structure Engineering
EE	-	Electrical Engineering
EEE	-	Electrical and Electronic Engineering
EnvE	-	Environmental Engineering
Geo	-	Geology
IndChem	-	Industrial Chemistry
MechE	-	Mechanical Engineering
PetrE	-	Petroleum Engineering

Introduction

Even though women's lives are more integrated nowadays, they are also fragmented. This study attempts to explore the paradoxes relating to the unresolved dilemmas for women on the tightrope between home and the workplace. In general, employment activity enhances women's economic independence and influences their negotiations about the divisions of labour in the home. But in Malaysia, the situation concerns the issue over conflicts of priorities, which seem to challenge the traditional gender roles of woman, wife, mother and homemaker. What happens when family commitments come into conflict with the demands of employment? When the two seem incompatible, which one gets priority? Is there any consensus in contemporary Malaysia about what constitutes approaches, obligations, responsibilities and duties towards family?

In this study, I attempt to explore my research hypothesis that industrialisation and globalisation in Malaysia are unable to over turn the traditional authority with regard to social expectations on women. Some elements of patriarchy over women, especially in relation to work and home still persist.

In relation to that, I will argue that traditional values remain in people's mind. Whatever condition they are in, women are expected to establish a marriage; whatever academic qualifications women have, they are expected to care for home and the family; and whatever career positions they hold at the workplace, women are expected to place themselves primarily as the family's homemakers. My study is to investigate in what ways the traditional system operates in the workplace and home, and how it affects women's lives. The experiences of female workers in Malaysia are recounted.

I will choose a group of female workers from a particular company. Considering the fact that they already have undergone years of learning and gained essential skills, educated women might get used to the idea of getting paid work. However, on odd occasions different stories might be generated. Not all women are the same, and therefore they might have different desires

about life and diverse aspirations about career. The diversity of the issues is one of the objectives that this study wishes to understand.

Other aims are:

- To study women's work orientation especially related to the meaning of work and family roles within the context of changing industrial society in Malaysia.
- To examine some gender issues such as patriarchal elements at home and the workplace.
- To get information about women participation in employment particularly on the issues of balancing paid work and family work.
- To understand the type of household management that employed women generally seem to adopt nowadays.
- To consider the prospect of engineering for women in Malaysia.

My research question rests on the observation that, *"in relation to the traditional culture, how have employed women in Malaysia progressed in line with industrialisation in the global economy? And how do they integrate these changes of the economic atmosphere into the demands of the workplace and home"*. The central theme of this study is fixed on the influence of traditional culture in the life of Malaysian employed women. In particular, it is fixed around the paradoxical circumstance of industrialising the country without jeopardising the cultural traditions. Clearly, this situation might bring tensions to most employed women in this country.

The Questions on 'Why' and 'What'

Why women? A male worker on the site asked me the same question. I only have a short answer, that is, being a woman researcher I feel more attached to work within the area of women's employment. If the explanation above has a personal dimension, my secondary explanation is to do with the existing literature. Research on men in Malaysia is plentiful but there is much less on women. For example, one of the most recent studies on employment in Malaysia was conducted by Mellström [2003] who explores the links between technology and the masculinisation of power among the male mechanics in Penang. Men and employment is still a main subject of academic discussion

in Malaysia. There is desperate need for contemporary research about women and work in Malaysia[1].

The following question is, what is the significant social factor that encourages women to participate in the employment? The change of educational atmosphere in 1970's Malaysia, which opened the possibility for more women to enter university, has increased women's opportunities in the workforce. Consequently, women's commitment to work rises with educational levels. They are more likely than the less educated women to work throughout their lives and to have very brief interruptions of work for childbearing [Fatimah. 1993]. Moreover, these women on the whole, get more interesting and challenging jobs than the jobs available to women in factories, offices and restaurants [Intan. 1999].

Now comes to the next question. Why working women? Main discussions have centred on the experience of low skilled women workers in manufacturing factories particularly in the mid-1970s when Malaysia had just recently transformed from agriculture domination to an industrial sector [Malaysia. 1981]. Major developments have actually happened since then, yet due to the lack of contemporary research, women's employment issues were constantly in views of women in low skilled jobs.

In their effort to pursue career, how do they deal with their family? Clearly, women and families are a significant issue. Working women have to cope in both worlds of work. If they are married with a family, they have the additional burden of childcare. Literature on gender at work cites that the norms of work life have developed to fit men whose life stages were uninterrupted by pregnancy, maternity, childcare and home managing [Walby. 1997]. Women are different. They cannot match this pattern because women's work life proceeds at a different rhythm from men's. With many private matters at home requiring their attention, their public life outside home is expected to be less significant.

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[1] The Ministry of Women and Family Development and the Ministry of Human Resources are interested in keeping a copy of my study.

Why choose female engineers? Many discussions highlight that women, technology and work seem mutually contradictory [Korvajarri. 2001]. Technology in Malaysia is almost synonymous with men [Mellström. 2003]. Together with the entanglement of domesticity, female engineers (and other professionals) faced undeniably complicated tasks ahead.

Discussion about work and women's lives especially in Malaysia is crucial, not only for academic purposes but also for the benefits of society.

The General Theme of the Research

The paradoxical duality between the public and private spheres is challenged in this academic study. The spheres could be viewed as a rationalisation covering the contradictions by the need to recruit women into employment while simultaneously keeping their role at home.

By a Malaysian standard, it is paradoxical enough for a woman to work since she is often regarded as the upholder of moral guidance in the country [Heyzer et. al. 1989], which implies that she should be at home. The Government blamed career mothers due to their inability to produce good children, and consequently good citizens to the nation. It is again paradoxical for a woman to hold a good job in a high position with a good salary due to the existing male dominance in the employment market. But most importantly, it is very much paradoxical for a married woman to concentrate working full-time when at the same time she has to handle her family life too.

The twofold paradoxical relationship of the need for human capital and the need to build the functional aspects of traditions has becomes a threat to Malaysia. This study believes that the root of the problem rests on some traditions that dampen working spirits among female workers.

This study is in a position to explore the present views of how female workers in general look at the issues of employment and home. Malaysia, as one of the successful modernised developing nations in Asia, is seen to have a dilemma in reassessing its traditional perspective on gender relation issues. Due to the influence of traditions and religion, this study predicts that the participants put primary responsibility on home and family.

Research Outline

Following the elaboration, *Chapter 2* discusses the contextual meaning of 'work' experienced by women at home and the workplace. The role of being a woman is not easy. There are obvious duties that need to be done when a woman is an employee with a family. In this study, I want to explore the situation whereby although many women try to combine between the two roles, there is always potential for conflict.

For women in Malaysia, their role is more strongly determined by family and society. In this part, substantial comparisons and extensive discussions will be drawn from the UK and US experiences and settings. Judging from the current employment pattern in Malaysia, the study believes that female workers around the globe share comparatively the same experiences in their personal and work life. Women in Britain also experience the same dilemmas [Brannen. 1992]. In the US, Hochschild [1997: 1990] pinpointed that the female worker will always have the sense of unfinished business no matter whether she is at home or at work, and this feeling constrains their better chances to enjoy life.

Chapter 3 presents a brief historical statement of women in Malaysia in education, work and family since Independence until the present (1957 – 2003). In particular, it reviews the historical account of employment trends and patterns among female workers in Malaysia. Almost every society in the world has been undergoing social change mainly due to industrialisation and urbanisation. Malaysian society is of no exception since this country has been rapidly transforming itself from an agricultural to an industrial economy and is presently entering into the information technology age.

Chapter 4 introduces PetCo, one of the petrochemical companies in Malaysia, which is used as the fieldwork site. The company's high involvement in technological advancement relies heavily on skilful professional people. Its female workers, especially the female engineers, are the research sample[2].

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[2] In the report, I used a specific reference in distinguishing the sample. For example, the 'respondents' were the questionnaire sample; the 'interviewees' were the interview sample; the 'participants' were the general sample of my study.

Chapter 5 elaborates on the research process that is applied in this study. The fieldwork was conducted at three major PetCo sites around Malaysia. In this study, both qualitative data that include the interviews and observation as well as quantitative data based on the questionnaires are collected and analysed.

Chapter 6 elaborates on the life experience of the female employees at PetCo. The chapter discusses the working atmosphere at PetCo and how it has affected their life. The division of labour, gender discrimination at work, commitment to work and career are among the most important themes, which are highlighted here.

Due to the changes of the lifestyle and the rising cost of living of the country, women are increasingly needed to earn money for the family. There is an increase of dual-earner families in Malaysia [Jamilah. 2001]. Female spouses are becoming significant contributors to the family's maintenance and expenditure. However ironic it may sound, I also envision that money factors may also facilitate women to decide not to continue working because husbands are seen as the sole provider of the family. Once their husbands are able to provide the material necessities efficiently to the family, women may like to resign and give full commitment to the family.

Chapter 7 explores the critical factors of women in engineering. How female engineers felt about their experiences at the universities and the obstacles of engineering to women. Issues of male advantage are explored.

According to Carter and Kirkup [1990], women who cross the threshold of 'masculine fields' have to bring 'feminine values' for continuous existence. It was a double-bind situation whereby I anticipate that female engineers in my study will have to carry the feminine attributes such as to be soft and always smiling to achieve quality work and co-operation from the males who will insist on them acting as women whereas at the same time expect women to be strong. It may be a no-win situation for female engineers because in this masculine line of job, they may be criticised or mistreated if they tried to act otherwise. On the other hand, crises may also occur when female engineers use too much of feminine attributes because it represents non-professional

attitudes. Therefore, I view that female engineers may fall in to a trap in between situations. This scenario is very similar for women who work in the male dominated area in the West [Cockburn. 1985a: 1985b: McDowell. 1997: Spencer and Podmore. 1987]. My participants may need to ensure that they possess the characteristics of both feminine and masculine in pursuing a career in engineering.

The disagreement of masculine engineering and feminine traits is a complicated issue. Task responsibilities are believed to originate from gendered attributions of women's and men's socialisation [Crompton and Harris. 1999a: 1999b]. As a result, the number of female engineers in Malaysia may be on the rise but they are seen to be more suitable in the middle management.

Chapter 8 continues to discuss the life account of female employees specifically about their domestic, private life. The dilemma of integrating the roles as professional workers and family women creates imbalances in their lives. The unfair gender relations at home, childcare issues and life aspirations are explored here.

In this chapter, I attempt to explore husband's involvement at home. Although men in the West are generally taking on more hours of domestic work, it still run behind that of the increase in the hours of women's paid work [Arber. 1993a]. Gershuny et. al. [1994] described this process as "lagged adaptation" in which the division of domestic labour is slowly being adjusted to the substantial increase of woman in the full-time employment. By contrast, I expect to see the husbands in my study do some selective types of domestic works such as groceries shopping, which obviously will take little time to complete. In addition, I argue that having an outside help actually reduced husbands' participation at home.

Chapter 9 discusses the evidence of influence of male dominance and patriarchal elements in Malaysia, which I attempt to link with the authority of religion and traditional customs on women's public and private roles.

Two possibilities are worth considering in view of this assumption. First, Duxbury and Higgins [1991] pointed that due to the strong traditional role

expectations many women adopted the philosophy of altruism that accepted that motherhood and familial responsibilities as their 'primary' roles while ignoring the personal needs. I predict that my interviewees will struggle to admit the problems within the boundary of these roles, which eventually will undermine their sense of motherhood. Second, although the conflicting women's dual roles are extremely demanding in terms of time and energy, they may be also a major sense of satisfaction to many women, especially among my interviewees.

Moreover, I also interested to know the extent of kinship network system that practiced by my interviewee. Integrating career and the family remain foremost issues, which at best may be reconciled by keeping families small and engaging domestic helps. A declining family size has been associated with the demand of employment. However, the importance of remittances to kin might intensify forms of family dependence [Stivens. 1996]. The peculiar existence of 'kin help' may support the evidence that wider family ties are continuously important for Malaysian women.

Chapter 10 concludes some significant issues that arrived from this study. It may be concluded that even though Malaysian society generally has changed substantially due to industrialisation and the present force of globalisation, many traditional elements still remain. This chapter leads the readers to the discussion about the dilemma of the dual-burden faced by female workers in Malaysia both in their professional life and domestic life. The focal point of this study rests on the paradoxical elements that most employed, married women have to endure in life.

Conclusion

With the advance of industrialisation and the growth of a market economy, women are needed in the workforce. At the micro level, women are needed to acquire monetary income to sustain the family. Then again, the male dominance perspective blamed the rising trend of working mothers in the paid workforce that impaired the Malaysian family structure [Jamilah. 1992a: 1992b: 1992c], which not only affected on quality of family life and gender division of the housework but also childcare issues. My study surmises that most problems are derived from the slow changing of the

traditional system against the fast developing economic structure in the country.

It is hoped this study may serve the purpose of enriching the literature about women in work and home in Malaysia. Most importantly, it is hoped that the research outcome will unfold the general patterns of women's workforce situation in Malaysia as well as the current practices of household management among dual-earners in a family. The next chapter refers to the existing literature on women's dilemma between home and the workplace.

Introduction

The notion of 'work' is an ideological construct that is often synonymous with paid work [Dex. 1988]. People commonly consider work as activity that is paid [Parker. 1983]. However, 'work' is also used to describe tasks done at home. Domestic work has never been considered as proper work, thus has no economic value. How can we assess the economic value of the work in the household?

Within a changing societal context, Glucksmann [1995] studied the historical changes in the distribution of women's and men's work in Britain particularly between the household economy and market economy. She has reformulated the term 'work' as *an activity that was necessary for the production and reproduction embedded in both social and economic relations and structures* [Glucksmann. 1995; 69]. She proposed the 'total social organisation of labour' (TSOL) to refer not only the technical aspect of work but also to the social division of all the tasks undertaken by people. TSOL emphasises the totality of work's activities and the relationships of domestic unpaid work and economic paid work. Since women are unable to be in two places at the same time, she suggests a theoretical consideration of both spheres together. Domestic work and economic work need to be encompassed rather than viewing them as independent entities. However, in a Malaysian context, there is a strong discussion between the spheres, with domestic work done by women is an aspect of obligation towards the family.

In this chapter I attempt to understand women's work orientation from an international context. However, a specific discussion shall be directed to comprehend the situation and condition of employed women in Malaysia. I would expect to find a strong influence of patriarchal elements from my respondents. I would argue that religion and culture play significant aspects in determining the life of my women. A brief discussion of these aspects may help the audience to understand the general scenario of employed women in Malaysia. The later part of this chapter discusses the prospects of women in engineering.

Women's Work Orientation

Starting from the 1970s, women's work orientation became the topic of discussion in the UK [Arber and Gilbert. 1992: Dex. 1988: Drew et. al. 1998]. Some literature focused on the psychological effect of work for women while other studies emphasised the economic. Parker [1983] identified work with the means of earning a living. Pahl [1989] viewed money as a medium of exchange, not only in the conventional economic sense but also in a social and ideological sense. The issue of money in a marriage is about power in a marital relationship. Even though people realised the importance of domestic work, they gave more value to not on employment outside the home since the latter brought the money in [Jenson et. al. 1988].

The issue of women, work and family in Malaysia is generally directed towards understanding the condition of women in the workplace [Jamilah. 1992c: Kaur. 2000: 1986: Lim. 1990: Nik Safiah. 1992: Rohana. 1988]. In various studies of Jamilah, she found that women's work orientation in Malaysia was seen as more towards family work rather than market work [2001: 1999: 1994a]. In addition religious and cultural values place extreme importance on the women's homemaker role [Noraini. 2001].

It has been suggested that market work or family work might fluctuate according to occupation, life cycle and national context [Crompton and Harris. 1998a]. They argued that the work patterns of women were the product of the choices they make towards their particular circumstances, opportunities and constraints in life. Hakim [2000] produced a preference theory on women's work orientations whereby women in affluent societies have a real choice between family work and market work. She identified three distinctive groups as the home-centred, adaptive or work-centred. She argued that women who are work-centred will often choose to be childless or will have children later as an expression of normality whereas the home-centred women will prioritise home and family. The adaptive women are the ones who do not want to make a choice between work and family but by contrast show a temporary emphasis rather than a lifetime commitment [Hakim. 2000].

Based on Hakim's observation, the Malaysian women are seemingly more often classified as the home-centred group. Much literature on Malaysian women and career emphasises the significance of home and family rather than work and career [Jamilah. 2001: Noraini. 2001]. In fact, on the basis of social expectation, traditions and religions, marriage and children are important components for the well being of the women and the continuity of the society. According to Noraini [2001; 180], *"a Malay rural woman is essentially without status until she is married and has children"*. Additionally Jamilah reported, *"There is a perception about marriage as a fundamental ingredient for ones' existence or a necessity in one's life"* [2001; 33]. These quotations clearly confirmed the societal emphasis of marriage and motherhood.

However, a critique of Hakim's preferences theory viewed that the changes of women's life cycle may be considered to be significant for their participation in the workforce. Changes in a woman's life-cycle situation such as in marriage, the birth of a child, the youngest child starting school, children leaving home are likely to have considerable impact on her orientation to work [Dex. 1988: Fagan and Rubery. 1996: Ginn. et. al. 1996]. Similarly, the marital status of women is also significantly important. In the beginning, I envision that the unmarried women in my study may be identified as the work-centred, however once they get married, I imagine that they may incline to be identified as the home-centred. I hypothesise that religion and culture play a significant role in establishing this work pattern among my participants.

Indisputably, the work pressures on married female workers are increased when they have husbands and children [Crompton. 1997: Firth-Cozens and West. 1991: Hudson and Sullivan. 1990]. Female workers with family in Malaysia also face the same pressure [Hing and Rokiah. 1986: Intan. 1996: Sha'bah. 1997]. Both areas of work demand competency. As women are expected to manage the domestic jobs at home, they are expected to bring to their jobs all the energy, talent and motivation that employers have long expected of men in the work force [Collinson and Hearn. 1996]. Women with a responsibility at home might experience a conflict of priority. Is it to home that their commitment should be directed or to the workplace? Or is it possible to manage both?

Women's Paid Work and Family Work

The separation of 'public' and 'private' work relates closely to women. A home appears to be represented largely a site for personal fulfilment and emotional well being whereas the workplace is identified with paid work [Hochschild and Machung. 1989]. Family life is seen as a socially integrated, symbolic reproduction domain governed basically by a common interest of family members whereas working life is conceived as a systematic integrated, material reproduction domain governed basically by individualism and self-interest [Roman. 2001].

Increasing attention since the 1980s has been paid to the comparative analysis of women's labour force participation [Beechey. 1989: Dale and Glover. 1990: Jenson. 1988: Rubery. 1988: Stichter and Parpart. 1990]. The impact of work on women is so great, as Pahl [1988; 1] summarised *"(the) confusion and ambiguities (on work and women) about its meaning, nature and purpose in our lives are widespread"*. This quotation suggests that the paradoxical relationship of women with waged work and family continues as a dominant but unresolved question.

This study viewed the paradoxical situation of 'work' from the market economy and household life as the outcome of existing traditional gender roles. For example, the accepted notion of the "male breadwinner" within the Malaysian context is to leave the responsibility to earn money to the male spouse while Malay women commonly accept that the housework role should be their priority [Rohana. 1997a]. In view of the fact that a man is the wage earner of the family, his place is therefore more powerful and important than other members are [Crouch. 1996: Walby 1986]. A man's status as the producer of the labour power, who generates income and other valuable materials to the family, has bestowed him respect [Dixon. 1988: Eatwell et. al. 1990].

In the UK context, the widespread acceptance of men as breadwinners was weakening, especially since women in recent decades have entered the employment sector rapidly and men are losing out to women in economic life [Bradley et. al. 2000]. Jenson et. al. [1988] called this phenomenon the

"feminisation of the labour force" in which the growth of the service sector provided an increasing number of women's job particularly in caring, servicing and performing 'emotional labour' [Dex and McCulloch. 1997: Hochschild. 1983]. 'Feminisation' of a particular occupation or profession is seen to have the effect of deskilling it – where certain professions that previously excluded women altogether, such as Law [Spencer and Podmore. 1986] and Medicine [Allen. 1988] have admitted women, new patterns of gender segregation emerged between specialities within that profession. For example, women do not necessarily enjoy the status, pay, opportunities and conditions that previously accrued to men [Rees. 1998: 1992].

Within the family, women were regarded as being best suited in carrying out 'expressive' roles such as caring, while men focussed on 'instrumental' roles such as breadwinning [Rees. 1992]. Crompton [1999] has discussed the systematic differences in family building and the domestic division of labour in which she challenged the gender bias statement that men are the sole breadwinners in a family. The traditional "male breadwinner" in the UK is declining whereby the modern household witnessed increases in the number of dual-earners [Arber. 1993a: Crompton. 1999: Land. 1994]. The Malaysian household is also becoming economically demanding and thus requires the financial contribution from both partners. However, the case is complex in Malaysia because not only is the female partner expected to contribute to the household expenditure, she is also expected to manage the household, usually on her own [Jamilah. 2001]. On the contrary, Drew et. al. [1998] found European men are willing to be involved in family and housework.

The conflicts of women and work are heightened when the family is involved. It is often argued that women's role in childbearing and childcare is central to the sexual division of labour [Kiernan. 1992]. Even when children are cared for outside the home it is the mother who almost always makes the arrangement, delivers and picks up children and when they are ill, stays home for them [Beneria and Stimpson. 1987]. It is not surprising to find the "feminine dilemma" of the dual roles has reappeared under a new guise in more contemporary considerations of understandings of parenting and employment relations [Siltanen. 1994].

Women, Work and the Family

A marriage, according to a classic work of Myrdal and Klein [1968], means love and companionship and a sharing of life's pleasures and sorrows – a state of affectionate partnership rather than a time-consuming drudgery. A marriage is about an equal partnership in every aspects of life. This idyllic marriage structure does elaborate into the current situation of the increasing participation of women in employment. However, one basic inquiry arose, *"does a marriage go together with career for women"?* Rees [1998] viewed that the concept of equality pays no attention to the interaction of patriarchal elements at home and the workplace that produce gendered systems and organisations, which disadvantaged women.

Hochschild [1990] framed the notion of "stalled revolution", whereby women are increasingly moving into the previously male dominated sphere of paid work yet there has been no equivalent increase in the amount of unpaid domestic work carried out by men. Women have gone to work but men, the workplace and culture have not adjusted to the new reality. As a result many women keep continuing working at home doing housework after contributing their energy and time at the workplace. It is commonly cited that home is another extension of workspace for women whereas for men home is a site of leisure and escapism from the world of paid work [Beneria and Stimpson. 1987: Grint. 1991: Rai et. al. 1992: Sokoloff. 1980: Stockman et. al. 1995]. Unsurprisingly, Hochschild [1997: 1990] found that some employed women feel that life at the workplace is more interesting and happy rather than home. The increased freedom of decision-making due to having employment may have certain implications on my research participants. I envisage that a small number of women in my study will incline to view workplace as a more interesting place than home.

According to Hochschild and Machung [1989], an employed woman has a "second shift" at home. The "first-shift" occurs at the workplace. She becomes hurried because of the long workday at the office, she feels pressed to go home to organise for the family time. Then comes the "second-shift", which occurs at home when she is in the position of a homemaker[3].

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[3] Hochschild further explained the "third-shift" phenomenon [1997] whereby working mothers notice, understand and cope with the emotional consequences of the responsibilities especially raised by their children. This can be seen through the children's protest responses expressing their feelings about the scarceness of the family's quality time.

Additionally, Hochschild [1997] develops a concept of "reversal worlds" of work and home. Laypersons normally understood that the workplace was frantic site whereas home was a restful place. People particularly men are believed to be able to get off from the hectic hook of work to return to the peaceful embrace of home. However, Hochschild found that women were reported to feel a relief from the never-ending 'work' at home by going to the manageable demands of 'home' at the workplace [1997]. Work, according to Hochschild, has become home and home has become work.

Though it is inappropriate to regard this situation as homogenous to all women, it is useful to hypothesise that more women workers find their 'free time' at work. This happens because usually office tasks have deadlines that differed from the drudging never-ending domestic works. In addition, they may also enjoy their social hours with colleagues at work. Therefore, I predict that work may emotionally liberate women. These women may see working at the workplace as escapism from routinised household matters.

However, when women participate at the workplace, they may face discrimination at work. Earlier studies have argued that due to the expectation that women may become pregnant there is little incentive to encourage them to follow training courses or to ensure that they develop the skills necessary for higher-grade posts [Arnup et. al. 1990: Collinson. 1988: Homans. 1984: Mackie and Patullo. 1977]. The time-off that employed women take in pregnancy seems to prevent the chances of women achieving the highest point of the career curve [Arber and Gilbert. 1992]. It is believed that without marriage and children, women could successfully penetrate the glass ceiling [Corti. et. al. 1995: 1994: Dex et. al. 1993]. One of the most commonly cited explanations for women's failure to succeed in career terms is their inability or unwillingness to put their career first due to their domestic commitments [Barret. 2001: Spencer and Podmore. 1987].

Although this situation has not hindered some women, they may be conscious of negotiating between hours spent at work and hours needed at home [McAllister. 1990: Drew et. al. 1998]. In a more serious case, some career-minded women adopt a drastic change of withdrawing from marriage

and family altogether. Literatures have cited that women often cannot and will not separate home from the workplace in the way that many men are prepared to do [Delamont. 2001: Martin and Roberts. 1983]. For example, a study by Morrow [1998] showed that women in the US are choosing work and career over marriage and children. Although there is no concrete evidence of a marriage withdrawal phenomenon in Malaysia, a significant comparable inclination to the delaying marriage phenomenon is recently publicised in Malaysia. The latest statistics revealed 10.2 per cent of Malay women and 15 per cent of Chinese women aged between 30 to 34 years were unmarried [Jones. 2000a]. Notably, the number of female singletons within the 20 to 24 age groups rose from 60.2 per cent in 1991 to 68.5 per cent in 2000 [Malaysia. 2000]. This scenario is probably a direct result of rapid industrialisation of the country that generates more employment chances for women.

Women's Employment in the Industrialised yet Patriarchal Malaysia

This study believes that the unresolved questions of career and home experienced by women are derived from the continuation of the traditional patriarchal practices in Malaysia. Patriarchy is a form of social organisation in which a male (the patriarch) acts as the head of the family or household who holds power over females and children [Walby. 1990: 1986: Bina. 1988]. In this social system men achieve and maintain social, cultural and economic dominance over females and younger male members.

Pateman [1989] believed that a modern patriarchy is constructed into two spheres. The universal sphere (or civil society) of freedom, equality, individualism, reason, contract and impartial law encourages a woman to participate in the workforce. Another sphere is the private world of particularity, natural subjection, ties of blood, emotion, love and sexual passion confines a woman to domesticity. The paternalist condition plays a significant role in providing women with access to the basic maternal prerequisites for establishing herself in the public sphere such as an access to paid employment with childcare facilities.

Within feminist theory, the use of the term patriarchy has led to the discussion of gender relations of inequalities and power. Walby [1990]

separated the "private patriarchy" that takes place in the household through arranged marriages, dowries and domestic labour from the "public patriarchy" that takes place outside the household through education and labour market. In a Malaysian context, both spheres touch the life of the women. Although arranged marriages and female dowries are less common, marriage is still expected for women and domestic labour is still considered women's job.

The emergence of industrial society has promoted the right of the married women to employment [Folbre. 1993: Hudson and Lee. 1990: Mann. 1986]. After the Second World War, such promotions loosened the bonds of patriarchal control over married women in most of the Western countries. In the UK particularly since the 1970s, patriarchal authority has diminished [Bradley. 1989: Crompton. 1997: Walby. 1990]. On the other hand, the same phenomenon might still be opened to question in Malaysia. The nation might be economically developed but the patriarchal elements may still be felt. This scenario may place women in a position of considerable disadvantage in the workforce [Morris. 1995: Stivens. 1987].

According to Tinker [1976; 24], *"Development has tended to put obstacles in women's way that frequently prevent them from maintaining what little economic independence they do have...(as) compared to men, women have lost as development has proceeded"*. Many economic development plans in Malaysia have not succeeded in benefiting its women population [Jamilah. 1994a]. As men were seen as the leader and head of the family as well as the protector of their women, various development projects in Malaysia were allocated specifically for men assuming that these men will share these development benefits with their womenfolk. It is clear that this does not always happen [Ismail and Saha. 1993: Jamilah. 1992b: Paukert. et. al. 1981: Rokiah. 1996: Sha'bah. 1997].

It is true to say that since Malaysia attained its independence in 31st August 1957, the influence of patriarchal value in various aspects of life has been waning. There was no overt opposition for women to participate in the development of the nation. Yet there is one specific aspect in Malaysia that seems to be quite unchanging over the time – the social picture of the traditional culture on women, work and the family is very much the same

throughout decades. Malaysian traditional culture has ordained that if a woman is married, her job is to care for and manage the home. If a woman is single, she is encouraged to get married and establish a family of her own. Whether she is employed or not in the labour force is less important, but if she is married and at the same time also working, it is her responsibility to see the smooth functioning of her family maintenance, and equally to manage their jobs at the workplace. These are societal expectations, which become a social dilemma to some women.

In a Malaysian context, a failure to attend basic familial arrangements may imply that she is incapable of her role as a wife and mother. Coincidently, some patriarchal elements seem to be about 'the guardian of morality' because men took it upon themselves to ensure that mothers were taking their 'rightful' place at home looking after the children [Rohana. 1997a: Wazir-Jahan. 1998]. Malaysian women are living their everyday lives in a context in which the 'family' is highly politicised. There are frequent debates in the media and by politicians about the implications of women going out to work and about the pressures and costs of juggling work and home. In the last few years, there has been a nation-wide moral panic about the role of working mothers in producing delinquent children [Jamilah and Louis. 2001]. Also, there has been widespread anxiety about social problems posed by teenagers such as loafing in shopping centres and having promiscuous relationship [Aminah and Narimah. 1992].

In his suggestion of the need to instil good values for children to become responsible citizens in their adult time, the former Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamed blamed ever-busy working parents who spend less time with their children [The New Straits Times. 24th July 2001]. In his judgement, time that was taken up at work makes parents, especially the mother tend to neglect the task of educating and bringing up children. His accusation against employed women due to the deteriorating of familial values is a good example of the traditional principle on the interlocking issue of women, work and the family in Malaysia.

However, it seems that not only males are viewing the event in that way. In fact, the most recent study conducted by Jamilah [2001] found more than

half of her female respondents hold the belief that society's social ills are rooted in the full-time employment of women outside the home. Many times the women are caught with the notion of *"it is women's responsibility to take care of the family and home"*. It seems women themselves admit and feel responsible for the failure of the family due to their career commitments. It is therefore safe to say that that this notion was rooted in the social structure and not solely come from people's consciousness.

Feminist theorists in work relations have long defended the right of women to achieve a better position in the workplace and home. Due to their constant struggle the employment structure has changed. However, it has also been the case that the changing nature of work increases the pace of the jobs and has reduced the amount of control workers have over the jobs [Bradley. et. al. 2000].

Another drawback that arises from the changing employment structure is the categorisation of jobs according to gender. When a job is labelled as a women's job, less economic or social value is attached to it. 'Women's jobs' ranging from clothing industry to typing exist in the UK because a long tradition has pushed young girls who could do something else into these types of jobs speciality [Cockburn and Ormrod. 1993]. The ideology is that a girl should choose a "feminine" occupation. Also, according Datuk Dr. Ng[4], there are some phenomena in Malaysia whereby women's looks rather than qualifications and capabilities still play a significant role in asserting their positions in the country [Sunday Star. 26th March 2000; 23].

The employment pattern in Malaysia has changed tremendously over the years [Malaysia. 2002]. The structure of the labour force in the country that once was based on the agricultural production has been revolutionised towards industrial composition [Malaysia. 2001a: 1981]. This economic transformation requires many women to participate in the workforce. However, as they are regarded as contributors to the development of the nation, Malaysian women are also the dominant participants in private matters at home [Jamilah. 2001: Noraini. 2001: Siti Rohani. 1991]. The

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[4] Datuk Dr. Ng Yen Yen, a qualified medical doctor who is the Deputy Minister of Finance and also a Chairwoman of the Women's Wing of the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA).

cultural expectation has clearly identified women's place to be at home and taking care of children.

Women's employment in Malaysia is still regarded as less important than men's due to the influence of cultural expectation that structured women's life [Amriah. 1993]. Women's status as secondary workers might be a result of at least two factors. First, the concept of the family wage in Malaysia reserved for the men as the head of the family might confer the male partner some privileges above his female partner and other members in a family. However, in a contemporary situation it is seldom only the men who support the families. There is an increasing case whereby women particularly divorcees and singles have to do so, alone. Second, women's wage was only regarded as an extra pocket money for personal luxuries [Martin and Wallace. 1984]. However, today's household trend in Malaysia has increasingly shown that frequently the wages of both women and men together keep the household going. Yet women's status has never been regarded as an equal contributor to the husband in the household [Amriah. 1993].

The classic position of women in employment is to be found in Parson's functionalist sociology of the family [1956]. Even though Parsons identified gendered tasks between women and men, he also argued that industrialisation removed many functions from the family system. According to him, the forces of technical change and the growth of the market economy progressively demand the full participation of all citizens of a nation including its women. For Malaysia, discouraging women to be involved in the workforce would plainly imply fifty per cent wastage of the potential human resource [Malaysia. 2001a].

Since I have suggested that the social structures of Malaysia display patriarchal elements, the next question is what are the patriarchal foundations that form gender disadvantages?

Religion and Culture in Women's Employment in a Multiethnic Malaysia
Religion and culture have many positive aspects in Malaysia. They act as social mechanisms in uniting the population and guiding their morality.

However, religion and culture may perpetuate stereotyped gender roles in the form of patriarchal and protectionist attitudes to discriminate against women [Wazir-Jahan. 1998: 1992].

One needs to understand the traditional religious-cultural systems that exist in Malaysia[5]. Whether it is Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism and Confucianism, a subordinate status of women within the household is almost unvarying. Unlike Western societies, which generally pride themselves on being secular, many Asian societies are typically religious and traditional societies, where virtually everything is explained within the constraints of religion, tradition and culture [Beckford. 1989: Smith. 1994].

Representations of the family in the last decade have been embedded within a larger 'Asian family' structure that is strongly supported by the Islamic elements of the country [Stivens. 1998a: 1998b]. Asian ethics and morality provide a buffer against the undesirable aspects of modernisation.

Before I discuss further, it is pertinent to expose the contextual meaning of traditional Islam and the cultural aspects, which are referred to in this study.

Religion

Islam is often represented as a traditional religion that denigrates women and limits their freedom. Traditional Islam may refer to the orthodox Islam that originated from Middle Eastern society in the seventh century [Leila. 1992]. This misrepresentation of Islam has created misunderstandings not only among the Muslims but also non-Muslims [Bloul. 1998: Fahmida. 1990]. According to Zainah [2001: 1987], the ideal and universal teaching of Islam have lost its glory under the hands of conservative Islamists who believe in the total segregation of women and men. These are the group of orthodox Muslims who believe in the confinement of a woman to the four

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[5] Of religions in Malaysia, Islam has a major follower. The Population and Housing Census reported that the number of people professing Islam grew from 58.6 per cent in 1991 to 60.4 per cent in 2000 [Malaysia. 2001a]. Buddhism was accepted by 19.2 per cent of people, which form the second largest religion in Malaysia. Followed by Christianity with 9.1 per cent and Hinduism with 6.3 per cent. The remaining 2.6 per cent professed by Confucianism, Taoism or other traditional Chinese religions. With this all-encompassing religiosity, a Malaysian regardless of any ethnic group might still hold firmly to religious and philosophical authority. For instance to call a Muslim individual irreligious is considered overtly offensive.

walls of the house to take care of her husband, children and household chores [Kandiyoti. 1991].

However, many scholars have found evidence in Islamic texts, which support women's rights, whereby women's status at that time was equally on the same foot with men. Hermansen [1992] found that some Muslim female figures were immortalised in heroic types not only as wives and mothers, but also warriors, geniuses, jurists and spiritual experts. But under the grips of patriarchal dominance, Islam has been seen as anti-woman, and supporting segregation in social systems where women are economically and politically marginalized [Iman. 1999]. Frequently, it is not religion per se which affects the form of female social position in society. The interaction of religious beliefs with the different levels and structures of male supremacy such as through cultural traditions and custom shaped female subordination, which is the outcome of gender imbalance in patriarchal society [Abaza. 2002: Omid. 2001: Norani. 1998].

The cultural and historical specifications of traditional Arabia dominated the current waves of Islamic principles, which in an orthodox way were biased against women. This traditional Islam has caught many Muslim countries including Malaysia in the throes of Islamic revivalism. The traditional Islam practised in Malaysia has evolved to adopt more Arabic inflections of the religion that reflect the culture of gender and family relations of a patriarchal and tribal Middle Eastern society [Zainah. 1987]. In her latest publication, Zainah[6] [2001] wrote that some feminist groups in Malaysia have been at the forefront in challenging the traditional authorities and their use of religions to justify women's subordination and to incite hatred against those who offered alternative views or protected the rights of women. According to her, it is wrong for Malaysia as a country that is multiethnic and multi religious to demand women to play a role of obedient wives and selfless mothers [Zainah. 2001]. Apparently, she believes that the patriarchal system is still the functioning system of the society.

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[6] Feminist statements by Zainah usually invited controversy among most Muslims in Malaysia. She together with other feminist thinkers in the country were accused of oversimplifying the principles of Islam by denying the positions of Hadith (the sayings and actions of the Prophet Muhammad SAW), Ijma' (the collective decisions of the religious scholars) and Qiyas (the comparative laws of the religion).

Although the vast majority of the participants were Muslims, it is not the purpose of this study to emphasise Islam alone because the perspective of other religions looking at women is also relevant here. In fact most religions have shown the same inclination to regard women as subordinates. For example, in Greek Civilisations, Socrates wrote, *"women is the greatest source of chaos and disruption in the world....she is like the dafali tree which outwardly looks very beautiful but if sparrows eat it they will die"* [Nazhat. 1982; 9]. Women met similar fates in Hinduism, which states that *"there is no creature more sinful than women....(a) woman is burning fire"* [Raja Rohani. 1991; 22]. Women are frequently represented as inferior in religious texts, and religion is used to justify and maintain men's dominant position in society [Beckford. 1989: Bynum et. al. 1986].

Having discussed the contextual usage of traditional religion, this study also feels the urge to clarify the research's framework of which cultural traditions are applied here.

Culture

Although there is no single understanding of culture, most definitions fix on the notion of shared beliefs, values, customs and meanings that distinguish one group of people from another. Hofstede [1991] defined culture as the manifestation of patterns of language and thought and in the forms of activity and behaviour, which is transmitted through symbols, artefacts, rituals, heroes and values. According to Fry [1984; 129], culture is *"social and cultural factors, which shape the way people make a living, the social units in which they live and work, and the meanings they assign to their lives"*, which specifically defines the position of culture in Malaysia. Abdullah [1996; 3] summarised the culture of Malaysian society as *"the glue that holds its members together through a common language, dressing, food, religion, beliefs, aspirations and challenges. It is a set of learned behaviour patterns so deeply ingrained that we act them out in unconscious and involuntary ways"*. Indeed, culture shapes the meaning people make of their lives and defines how people experience movement through the life course. The above description of culture, which includes religion as one of the cultural elements, is therefore a concept that is pertinent to this study.

The study of culture is indeed a complex undertaking. Competing concepts of culture together with post-modern critiques *"of a commonsensical, usually*

materialist notion of the social" [Bonnell and Hunt. 1999; 8] have made it desirable for researchers to identify their perspective. In this study, I align with the notion of culture as defined by cognitive anthropologists, that is, culture is acquired knowledge including the beliefs, religions, concepts and standards, organised by cognitive structures that people use to function properly in a cultural context [Quinn and Holland. 1987]. Cultural values are emotion-laden, internalised assumptions, beliefs or standards that shape how people interpret life experiences.

Functional theorists such as Parsons [1977: 1971: 1967: 1956] spoke about culture, which was based on the existence of different values and norms that governed human behaviours, and thus also implied of social control in ensuring conformity and applying sanctions to deviant behaviour. Parsons' perspective was influential in the development of modern functionalism where the concept of normative order is the central element of the social system that related socialisation and roles. In addition, Durkheim [Allen et. al. 1998: Miller. 1996] theorised society, as a moral order with the idea that social life is an ordered and continuous process was dependent upon shared expectations and obligations.

The influence of societal expectations in Malaysia is heavily related to the functionalism that maintains the balance of society and the social system. Functionalism in the classic work of Spencer explained the importance of social institutions primarily in terms of the functions they perform [Turner. 1985]. Additionally, Parsons emphasised the crucial issue of the interrelationship of parts to wholes in human society and the relationship between the social structure and people, as well as the issues of social order and social change [Holmwood. 1996]. However, in essence, the order of society in Malaysia relies on a patriarchal foundation.

A number of writers have compared Western and Eastern (or Asian) cultural values. These values are in flux and *do not correspond in any neat way with national or societal boundaries"* [Sewell. 1999; 55]. Eastern culture is based on relationship-oriented [Inglehart. 1990], and most significantly Malaysian cultures and values are based on societal acceptance [Wazir-Jahan. 1990]. The aspects of cultural traditions accepted by the society involve certain

beliefs and values on what is right and wrong. It also includes the prescription for correct and proper behaviour of individuals as women and men in the community as well as their obligations and rights in their association to one another.

Since cultures have their own rationale based on the acceptance of each ethnic group in Malaysia, the patriarchal social structure may still operate. Hindu and Muslim women may see seclusion at home as privileged [Epstein. 1982]. Most Malaysian communities accept a tradition that allows greater freedom for boys than girls [Jamilah. 2001]. On many occasions, socialisation is followed in accordance to the expressed and perceived gender differences, which are agreed by members of the group. Whether born as Malay, Chinese or Indian, a woman is socialised from a young age to play the roles of a daughter, wife, daughter-in-law and a mother [Wong. 1981]. Despite women's increasing participation in the wage labour force, the ideal role of women still is that of wives and mothers [Young and Salih. 1987]. Other cultural traditions throughout the world have also posed obstacles to women's development and flourishing [Rosen. 1989: Stockman et. al. 1995]. However, since the 1980s vigorous efforts have been directed to redefine women's roles at home and the workplace in the UK [Beechey. 1988: Cowan 1989: Hofstede. 1980], which have brought better conditions for women at home and workplace.

In much literature in Malaysia, the importance of forming a family and being part of those familial values is common [Jamilah. 2001: Manderson. 1980]. There are value dimensions that are shared by society from various ethnic backgrounds, among which filial piety and parenthood are prominent as life goals [Amer. 1992]. Quah [1990] indicated that women whether Malay, Chinese or Indian inclined to see marriage and motherhood as two of the essential goals in their lives. Additionally, Ong [1995] concluded that familial values are relevant to most of Asian societies.

In the labour market, culture has an important implication for the development of female industrial development in Malaysia [Wee. 1997]. According to Ong [1990], firms reproduce local cultural norms as a form of control over the female employees who work for them. Ong's analysis

demonstrates how old cultural forms and ideas of male-female relations can acquire new meanings and serve new purposes in changed arenas of power and boundary definition [Ong. 1990]. Even though they work away from home, young women are still subjected to the existing cultural norms as a form of control.

Due to the dictate of cultural traditions that have retained their strong influence on the views of both men and women, the concept of gender equality is not fully acceptable to all sections of Malaysian society. It may be only acceptable to feminists and a small group of educated and professional elite women and men. Some others, including women, are sceptical and prejudiced about the concept of gender equality. They are fearful that it will cause a serious upheaval of long standing revered traditional values.

In brief, if a culture is viewed as a way of life and religion as a way of looking at life, one can speculate quite unique things should be happening to Malaysia. In some cases women resist these traditions. In other times, traditions become so deeply internalised that they seem to record what was 'right' and 'natural'. To some extent women themselves frequently come to endorse their own second-class status. It seems impossible to deny that cultural traditions sometimes perpetrate injustice against women in many fundamental ways, touching on some of the most central elements of a human being's quality of life that includes health, education, political liberty and participation, employment, self-respect and life itself.

Having considered the effects of religion and culture on women, work and the family in Malaysia, the next agenda of this chapter is to pay attention to women's participation in professional occupations, especially in engineering.

The Prospects of Women in Engineering in Malaysia

I chose women in professional careers, especially from the engineering discipline. It is generally understood that engineering is normally a career for men [Everts. 1998]. Consequently, women are physically and mentally unsuitable in the engineering [Evetts. 1996]. When women are in that field, they may have a more holistic, caring and subjective attitude to engineering, whereas men may practice its objective, exploitative and controlling aspects [Davidson. 1984: Devine. 1992: Newton. 1987].

Women moving into higher level occupations tended to be concentrated into 'professional niches' associated with high levels of expertise, but less in the higher authoritative managerial level [Benson. 1988: Crompton and Sanderson. 1990: Savage. 1992]. In Malaysia, women are seen to be more concentrated in the middle management whereas men may cluster in the technical and top management levels in engineering [Jomo. 1990: McGee and Linge. 1986: Rohana. 1997b]. Chang concluded, *"Although female executives are increasingly accepted at management level, they still face problems of gaining recognition as an authoritative figure"* [1992; 6].

Previous literature has shown that women who are working in science consciously experience a conflict in the job [Longino and Hammond. 1990]. Although they are involved in high technological occupations, in many ways women could not say that they have moved out of the rigid gender roles that involve the stereotyping of roles. In order to make the condition more relevant or acceptable to female engineers, a postmodernist perspective suggested women separate from their feminine attitude at work [Cockburn and Ormrod. 1993: Cockburn. 1985a: 1983]. Keller proposed that women must undergo what she called a "fundamental disidentification from self" [1986] to practice science on its logical masculine perspective. Additionally, Wacjman relates the feminisation of occupation due to the technological change in the workforce [1991]. Kramarea [1988] notes the typicality of a woman's avoidance of machines and technologies even though she might be a chemist or computing scientist. When women are involved in high technology industries, they are mostly clustered as low skilled workers in the clothing factories or they are directed towards the job of caring at the hospital [Cockburn. 1985a], and mostly at low paid jobs [Grint. 1991: Webster. 1996].

Within a Malaysian context, the number of women employed in the medical, legal and accountancy professions in early 1980s was insignificant because these were traditionally considered 'male' occupations. The Federation of Women Lawyers [1983] has reported that women lawyers formed only 16 per cent of the total number of lawyers in legal firms. In the field of medicine, local universities produced only 140 women doctors during the period 1975

to 1980. During the same period women engineers had merely increased from 1 to 38 individuals. More recent data from the Ministry of Women and Family Development [Malaysia. 2002] showed that only 11 per cent of engineers in the country were female. In general, women's participation in other professional careers is still less than men with the exception of accountancy.

A review of post-war economic history suggests that long periods of high sustained growth have been based on the factor of the adoption and spread of major technical innovation that brings about massive capital investment and new infrastructure [Magdoff. 1982]. Malaysia has tried to emulate the same principle in its effort to invigorate the country's economic stability. Coincidentally, in the mid-1970s natural sources of petroleum were found off the East Coast of Peninsular Malaysia. Later in the early 1980s, petroleum gas production has come on stream offering another primary commodity engine for the future growth of the Malaysian economy. Unfortunately, since then not much literature has discussed how far the petroleum technology has affected workers in Malaysia, let alone providing any discussion on women's participation in the petroleum technology.

Conversely, there is much discussion about female engineers in the UK [Davidson. 1989: Evetts. 1996: Newton. 1987]. Compared to other engineering disciplines, Davidson found that British women engineers were less involved in the petroleum industry [1989]. According to her, gas and petroleum products gave the impression that this industry carried a masculine aura. Due to the traditionally held professional and managerial positions among men, women faced most problems when entering and working in the oil industry [Davidson and Cooper. 1984]. In addition, some would argue that the typical grimey nature of the oil industry has also excluded women because it has a strong masculine representation that appears unsuitable for women [McCormack. 1981].

Choosing women engineers as a research sample is important because in essence this study wishes to understand the paradoxical experience of women working in a high technology sector, which appears to collide with the 'natural' disposition of femininity. Factors encompassing the nurturing

attributes of women, the discouraging by patriarchal values of women working in a 'manly' job and the social urge to manage family and home, will produce fresh evidence about the extent to which women, paid work and family work are still three separate entities.

What is the myth and what is the reality when we turn to those women who have cleared the educational hurdles and are entering the high technology work force? Donato and Roos [1987] have suggested that simply ensuring that women obtain educational credentials equal to men's will not create employment equity in the high-tech labour market.

The history of women's participation in science and technology is entangled with debates about women's intellectual and physical capacities pertaining to their roles and responsibilities in relation to men and children. The masculine nature of engineering will be at odds with the pressure of domestic affairs of the household. If the prediction is justifiable, it means that female engineers, especially those who are married and have children, may face a very difficult passage in life.

Another interconnected aspect that needs to be taken care of is the domestic arrangement among these female engineers. Gender is said to be a decisive factor in the allocation of household work [Stockman et. al. 1995]. In her study on female workers in Malaysia, Intan [1996] found that no matter how many exhausting hours women spent at work, they were still expected to continuously embark on domestic responsibilities at home. Because of their inability to cope with the double burden at home and at the workplace might result in some women having no choice but to leave their jobs. Additionally, Brodie [1996] wrote that women leave science and engineering careers twice as frequently as men.

Conclusion

This study attempts to learn the meaning and orientation of work and family roles among women professionals. It also explores the double burden issue that women, especially female married workers, may have to face at home and the workplace. Consequently, I make an effort to understand the degree

of patriarchal legacy that exists in the Malaysian context, especially in the familial structural system.

Most strikingly this chapter attempts to theoretically discuss the influence of religion and cultural traditions in the life of women in Malaysia. It is widely understood that attitudes towards women based on cultural traditions are hard to change, and certainly could not be transformed overnight. These phenomena still put forth a pervasive and lingering influence on society despite the political force to remove the more obvious discrimination of whatever kind against women. It is a paradoxical situation when Malaysia is seen as fast becoming a modern, post-industrial nation with multinational and global interests yet still embracing cultural traditions tightly.

Understandably, both women and men shape Malaysian society, but built into this structure is male dominance over women. Consequently, it is men who decide what is appropriate for women. For example, men perceive women's vocation in terms of running their household. On the other hand some women, who are progressive and aggressive, are no longer content to fit the traditionally prescribed patterns. Nevertheless, there are also some women who are more accepting, not yet able to discern what new possibilities may be open to them, let alone whether or not they might want to take advantage of such opportunity.

In my effort to examine why work is such a potentially a more complex issue for women, two aspects of women's social and psychological contexts will be considered. These are seen to contribute to the dilemma of women's position in the workforce. Firstly, it is no longer adequate to view women as being simply passive victims of sexist society in which the social structure, institution and legislation go against women's fuller social participation. Secondly, it is also required to consider how women's development within a patriarchal culture that perpetuates a specific notion of womanhood limits possible social changes and progress.

This chapter discussed the theoretical notion of 'work' in relation to women. Apparently, employed women encountered a dilemma between paid work and family work. However, often they give way to the latter due to the personal

reasons and obvious responsibilities at home towards the family. The next chapter illustrates the social condition of Malaysian women particularly in education, work and family.

CHAPTER THREE
Malaysian Women in Education, Workforce and Marriage
(1957 – 2003)

Introduction

Traditionally, Malaysian women have been involved in public activities. However, wars and upheavals particularly in the early twentieth century retarded their active participation in the country. After getting independence in 1957, women's status and position started to improve. The 1970s were the point when many women got involved in the employment [Kaur. 1986]. The establishment of many factories by the international companies together with the New Economic Policy (NEP) by the Malaysian Government further encouraged women into the labour force.

In this chapter, I focus on the life of women in Malaysia under the forces of colonialism and industrialism. The focal discussion here is to disclose the historical development of Malaysian women in education and employment, as well as marriage, since the country achieved its independence. How has education changed the positions of Malaysian women? How has the workforce transformation affected women? What were women's experiences in dealing with employment and household issues? Brought also into the discussion are women experiences in the public world of the workforce and the private domain of the home.

Brief Historical Information about Malaysia

Malaysia's modern independent history began in 31st August 1957, when the peninsular part of the country (or Malaya) was freed from the British rule. Sabah and Sarawak as well as Singapore joined the Federation of Malaysia in 1963 but Singapore withdrew in 1965. Malaysia at present consists of the West Malaysia (or the Peninsula) and the East Malaysia. The South China Sea divides the country into two parts. The Peninsular Malaysia is situated at the southernmost tip of the Southeast Asian mainland, while Sabah and Sarawak are situated in East Malaysia (or Borneo).

The course of the history of Malaya has been determined by its strategic position as one of the world's major crossroads. It was this position that made the country, especially its port cities such as Singapore, Penang and

Malacca, as a natural meeting place for traders, and later colonialists, from the East and West [Andaya and Andaya. 2001]. European powers[7] colonised Malay regions since the sixteenth century, which broke up the traditional economic and administrative structures of the country.

The traditional demographic structure of Malaya has seen the composition of the Malays together with the indigenous people of the country as the earliest inhabitants of the country. When trading activities were actively carried out in the fifteenth century, a small population of the Chinese established in Malacca and Indians in Penang. However, with the advent of British colonialism and economic growth during the nineteenth century particularly after the Industrial Revolution, the population structure changed. Instead of taking the Malays to work for them, the British recruited a large number of immigrant workers from South India and China[8]. As a result, a structural pattern of ethnic differentiation soon emerged in colonial economic arrangements [Faaland et. al. 1990]. The Chinese were brought in to work in the tin mines; the Indians were concentrated in the rubber plantations; the Malays mostly were found in the administration.

At a later stage, colonisation may explain the multiethnic character of the present Malaysian population. The Chinese population has always tended to urban sites, being mainly involved in private business. Many Indians are still estate workers, while the educated elite groups work in the professions and also in the public sector. The Malays constitute the rural population and dominate the governmental sector. The ethnic structure and occupational components remained stable until the country received its independence in 1957.

Under the constitutional laws 1957, the Malays and their Malay interests were protected. The Malays (and the indigenous groups) were identified as the original inhabitants of the country, the institution of Malay Sultanate were preserved, Islam was recognised as an official religion and *Bahasa*[9] was

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[7] The Portuguese arrived in the Peninsula in 1511, then the Dutch overpowered it in 1641, and finally this country was ruled by the British starting from 1797 to 1957 [Andaya and Andaya. 2001].
[8] The reasons given for this policy were that the immigrants provided cheap labour force, and compared to the Malays, they were obedient [Raja Rohani. 1991].
[9] *Bahasa* refers to the Malay language, which is accepted as a national language for the country.

accepted as a formal language. However, other ethnic groups were also allowed to practise their belief and language.

In an attempt to avoid the occurrence of ethnic riots as happened in 1969 between the Malays and the Chinese, the New Economic Policy (NEP) was launched in 1971 that introduced for the first time the terms *Bumiputra*[10] or the people who have cultural affinities indigenous to the region and the non-*Bumiputra* or the people whose cultural affinities lie outside indigenous characteristics [Shamsul. 2001: Malaysia. 1987]. *Bumiputra* includes the Malays, indigenous groups such as Iban, Kadazan, Negrito, Semai and Dayak as well as other Malay-related people such as Javanese and Acehnese. The non-*Bumiputra* groups consist primarily of the Chinese and Indians. These terms are the ethnic categories, which became the basis of the affirmative action that was critical in the distribution of development benefits to the poor people and the entrepreneurial middle class, especially for the Malays and indigenous groups [Syed Husin: 1981].

Women and Education in Malaysia

Before the coming of the British in the eighteenth century, traditionally Malay education was taught by religious teachers. These religious schools or *sekolah pondok* taught pupils to recite the Qur'an in Arabic and to read and write in *Jawi*, the Malay script. These schools were very popular among the majority of the general Malay population due to its close attachment to the Islamic teachings. More male students were sent to these religious schools than girls[11]. The education of young girls was undertaken by their mothers, aunts and older sisters who taught them household skills and crafts, at the same time handing down to them a wealth of oral tradition [Winstedt. 1966]. Malay royal, aristocratic and affluent families privately hired teachers and religious scholars for their girls so that they could be tutored to read and write, and take other lessons, particularly sewing and craft works.

Under the colonial regime, new schools were set up mostly by missionary agencies. The schools taught in English and were mainly located in towns. They were mainly attended them by the Chinese, Indians and Eurasians who

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10 Bumiputra is plainly interpreted as "son/daughter of the soil". The term refers to the federal classification of all indigenous people including the native groups of Malaysia [Fenton. 1999].
11 Malay parents at that time did not have the view that daughters should receive education like their sons [Abdullah and Muhammad. 1982: Manderson. 1979: 1978].

made up the urban population [Gullick and Gale. 1986]. The Malays were uninterested in attending such schools as they assumed that the British education might move them away from their religion and tradition [Raja Rohani. 1991].

During 1920s and 1930s, secular Malay primary schools were established in the country [Roff. 1994], whilst the Chinese and Indian population mostly attended schools based on their native languages. Common to these different primary ethnic schools was that they led nowhere, as pupils had to know English if they were to continue to a secondary level. Officers for the administrations were recruited from the English-medium secondary school such the Malay College Kuala Kangsar for boys [Roff. 1994] and the Tunku Khursiah College Seremban for girls [Manderson. 1980]. The Malays who attended these schools were mostly from the aristocracy.

Women's entry in the formal schooling system started in 1930s[12]. A single sex school was the preferred choice of most Malay parents. However, due to an elitist approach towards the distribution of schools and the culturally influenced attitudes against women's education, schooling has become the privilege of those women who mostly come from the urban and economically well off families. Women from the lower status economic groups such as the poor Malay farmer, Indian planter and Chinese peasant families remain disadvantaged and deprived of any educational attainment.

Contrary to the Malays' assumption, the system of education under the British rule was not about preaching Christianity but placed emphasis on women's nurturing and domestic roles. Therefore, the academic subjects such as needlework and domestic sciences were taught to the girls, whereas woodwork and metal works were some academic subjects for the boys [Hing and Rokiah. 1986][13]. Only after the Second World War did the number of women receiving education rise significantly [Lie and Lund. 1994]. The female students in Britain also experienced a similar situation at that time [Charlton. 1994].

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[12] Nevertheless, it was reported only five girls were attending these formal schools [Chelliah. 1960].
[13] These attitudes towards women's role might well have existed in the Malaysian society but they were institutionalised and reinforced by the colonial administration.

On the eve of independence in 1956, a radical school reform was introduced. Uniform academic curriculum and common language with *Bahasa* as a compulsory language were introduced at schools. The teaching of other ethnic languages was allowed but it had to be only one of the extra educational syllabi. The main aim of the reform was to achieve a national unity. A compulsory primary school system was later extended by a free admission from primary to secondary schools for all regardless of gender. The Malaysian school system today consists of a primary school (from the age of 7 to 12 years old) and a secondary school (from 13 to 17 years old), which can be extended to an upper secondary school (from 18 to 19 years old). Given the equality in access to education, nearly universal primary education has been achieved and the gender gap in school enrolment has disappeared in Malaysia[14].

An important factor contributing to the economic and social advancement of women has been the equal access of women to educational opportunities. The Universities and University College Act 1991 stipulates open membership to education for all citizens irrespective of sex, which categorically forbid discrimination against gender. It is difficult to verify whether or not equal gender opportunities to education were publicly discussed before the enactment of this written law. But the establishment of that particular law only a decade ago made one wonder how and what was the earlier form of access to education to women.

Nevertheless, the number of women enrolled at the primary and secondary levels in Malaysia has increased from 1970 to 1980. See Table 1.

Table 1: The Percentage of Educational Level by Gender, 1970 and 1980

Year	Primary Level		Secondary Level	
	Female (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)	Male (%)
1970	46.8	53.2	26.9	73.1
1980	48.4	51.6	35.6	64.4

Source: UNESCO. 1983

Gradually female students of all ethic groups at the primary and secondary levels were about half of the total enrolment, while an official Government

[14] The evidence indicated that by the year 1990, virtually equal proportions of boys and girls aged 6-15 years were attending school [United Nations. 1999a].

report showed the upper secondary level female students accounted for about 66 per cent of total enrolment in 2000 [Malaysia. 2001a].

During the early years after independence, the opportunity for tertiary education among women was limited. There was only one technical college and one university[15]. Most students, especially from the affluent families continued their education up to university level abroad due to the lack of higher education facilities locally.

Later, there was a noticeable increase in female university enrolment. In 1959 female undergraduates comprised 10.7 per cent of the total student enrolment in the University of Malaya, which was the only university at that time. By 1983 the overall female entrance to public university was 38.8 per cent in six universities[16]. In 1986 when another new university[17] was also established, female enrolment to the university level rose up to 41.2 per cent in 1987 [Malaysia. 1993]. See Table 2. Since then another two public universities in the East Malaysia and several private universities and colleges were established in Malaysia.

Table 2: The Female Enrolment in the Public Universities, 1957-1987

| Year	Female (%)
1957	10.7
1983	38.8
1987	41.2

Source: Malaysia[18]. 1987

Before the mid-1990s, male students consistently outnumbered female students in the local universities [Jamilah. 1999]. However, the gap in the ratio of female to male students progressively narrowed, particularly in the 1980s and early 1990s [Malaysia. 2002]. Starting after 1995, female students finally exceeded male students in the local institutions of higher learning. For example, there were 106 female students for every 100 males in tertiary education in 1996 [Malaysia. 2002]. In addition, female enrolment at the tertiary level in 2001 has increased to 58 per cent of the total enrolment in universities [Malaysia. 2002]. This is indeed a sharp contrast to the situation

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[15] It was the University of Malaya, which initially located in Singapore and subsequently relocated in Kuala Lumpur.
[16] These universities are the University of Malaya, National University of Malaysia, University Institute of Technology MARA, University of Technology Malaysia, University of Science Malaysia and the International Islamic University of Malaysia.
[17] The University of Northern Malaysia.
[18] Whenever 'Malaysia' was cited as the bibliographical reference in this study, I referred it to the official Government documents or reports, which were published by the Malaysian Government's printing unit.

36 years earlier. See Chart 1 for students' enrolment to the public universities according to gender.

Chart 1: The Enrolment in the Public Universities by Gender, 1998 - 2001

Gender / Year	Percentage
Female'01	57.8
Male'01	42.2
Female'00	56.3
Male'00	43.8
Female'99	56.2
Male'99	43.8
Female'98	54.1
Male'98	45.9
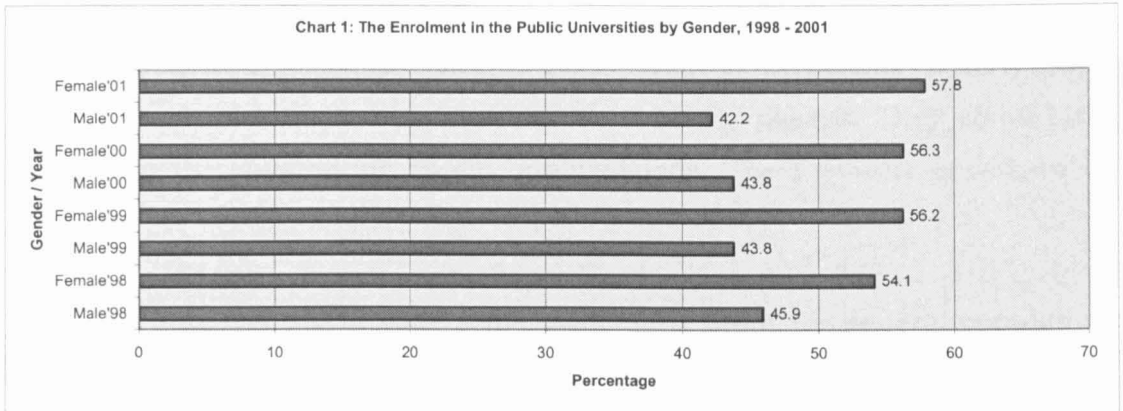
Source: Malaysia. 2001g

Despite the impressive statistics it must be noted that the bulk of women's participation in education is confined to the Arts, Humanities and the General Education streams, which accounted for 65 per cent of total enrolment in 2000 [Malaysia. 2002: 2001a]. In particular, there were still very few women in the fields of engineering, science and medicine when compared to the male students. In 1959, among the 77 female students enrolled in the University of Malaya, only three of them were enrolled in the science faculty while the rest studied in the arts faculty. In fact the University's faculty of engineering only admitted its first female student in 1964 [Malaysia. 2001g].

An increased accessibility to education has resulted in a marked improvement in the educational attainment for all Malaysians, especially women. According to the United Nations Human Development Report of 1998 [United Nations. 1999a], the primary enrolment ratio in Malaysia for both girls and boys in 1997 was 99 per cent, which was comparable to Japan. Furthermore, the same report reveals that Malaysia's achievement for secondary school enrolment at 115 female students for every 100 males was higher than of Japan (100:100) and Singapore (98:100). Those statistics indicate that Malaysia has offered an impressive higher educational level to its students, especially as far as female students are concerned, which is comparably better than the more developed Asian countries like Japan and Singapore.

The attainment of formal education might be a vehicle for upward social mobility and for getting better employment opportunities. However, the economic system, particularly starting from the 1970s could hardly absorb the mass of young school leavers. Consequently, there was a fairly large group of school leavers who have failed or barely passed. They stood little chance in the competition to get qualified jobs. These youths ended up in factories.

It is now important to include some basic data about the general population distribution of Malaysia that may direct us to comprehend the employment situation of the nation, particularly women.

A Demographic Profile of Malaysian Women

The rate of population growth continued to increase gradually as the country progressed towards a developed nation status. According to the Eighth Malaysia Plan [Malaysia. 2001a], of 23.3 million citizens in Malaysia, 66.1 per cent are *Bumiputra*, 25.3 per cent are Chinese and 7.4 per cent are Indians. The majority of the people are categorised in the age group 15-64 (62.9 per cent), which is acknowledged as the working age. An almost identical projection is set for the next five years. See Table 3 for detail.

Table 3: The Population Size and Age-Structure in Malaysia, 1995 – 2005 (million people)

	1995	%	2000	%	2005*	%	Average Annual Growth Rate (%)	
							7MP	8MP
Total Population	20.68		23.27		26.04		2.4	2.3
Citizens	19.68	100.0	22.04	100.00	24.66	100.0	2.3	2.3
Bumiputra	12.47	0	14.56	66.1	16.59	0	3.2	2.6
Chinese	5.22	63.3	5.58	25.3	6.04	67.3	1.4	1.6
Indian	1.49	26.5	1.63	7.4	1.78	24.5	1.8	1.8
Others	0.50	7.6	0.27	1.2	0.25	7.2	-12.7	-1.1
Non-Citizen	1.00	2.6	1.23	-	1.38	1.0	4.3	2.4
Age Structure								
0-14	7.25	35.0	7.71	31.1	8.15	31.3		
15-64	12.71	61.5	14.62	62.9	16.77	64.4		
65 and above	0.72	3.5	0.94	4.0	1.12	4.3		

Indicator: * An estimate, which is based on the preliminary count of the Population Census 2000 and has been adjusted for under-enumeration.

Source: Malaysia. 2001a

The recent count of the Population and Distribution and Basic Demographic Characteristics Report taken under the Population and Housing Census 2000 [Malaysia. 2001d] showed the growth rate in Malaysia for the 1980-1991 and 1991-2000 was 2.6 per cent, which is among the highest

population growth rates in the world. Additionally, the latest Government figure has reported that women make up approximately 48.9 per cent (11.4 million) of Malaysia's population. Of this total, 48 per cent (5.47 million) are in the working age population of 15-64 years who presently accounted less than half of the labour force [Malaysia. 2001a].

According to the United Nations [1998: 1993] and the Malaysian official statistics [Malaysia. 2001c: 2001d], Malaysian women enjoyed a remarkably better life condition than before, particularly immediately after independence. The life expectancy at birth of women in Malaysia has increased significantly from 58.2 years in 1957 to 72 years in 1980 [Malaysia. 1983: 1970]. As Table 4 below showed, it then increased gradually to 75 years old in 1999 and 2000 [Malaysia. 2001c: 2001d: United Nations. 1993]. The literacy rate was at 83 per cent. The average age for women to get married has increased from 23 years old two decades ago to 25 years old in 2000.

Table 4: The Status of Malaysian Women, 1980 – 2000

Years	Life expectancy	Average age at 1st marriage	Literacy rate (age 15-24 only)
1980-90*	72.3	23.5	83
1999**	74.9	-	-
2000***	75.0**	25.1	-

Source: * United Nations. 1993
** Malaysia. 2001c
*** Malaysia. 2001d

Reportedly, the rate of employment expansion fell behind the labour force growth rate during most of the 1960s, before overtaking it in the early 1970s [Markanday. 1986]. Later, the employment rate again experienced a decline throughout most of the later part of 1970s until 1982 after which unemployment has been rising again, exceeding 9 percent in 1987. An economic analysis of the 1980s conducted by Jomo [1990] explained that the decline in unemployment during decade before 1982 was largely due to the growth of labour intensive export-oriented industrialisation as well as the high technical expertise. However, the 1990s have seen the Malaysian labour force growing fairly steadily except in the agricultural sector. In general, the economic atmosphere of Malaysia was very much fluctuating before it stabilised after the mid-1990s [Galenson. 1992]. Yet, this economic stability was interrupted by the 1997 Asian economic crisis [Malaysia. 2001e], which drastically disrupted the economic progress of the country [Kanitta. 2001]. See Table 5.

Table 5: The Key Economic Data of Malaysia, 1995 - 2000

Item	Year					
	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999*	2000**
Population (million)	20.7	21.2	21.7	22.2	22.7	23.3
Real GDP Growth (%)	9.4	8.6	7.7	-7.5	4.3	5
Labour Force (thousand)	8,257	8,641	9,038	8,881	9,010	9,194
Labour Force Growth (%)***	5.4	4.6	4.6	-1.7	1.5	2
Employment (thousand)	8,024	8,417	8,805	8,563	8,741	8,920
Employment Growth (%)	5.5	4.9	4.6	-2.5	1.7	2.1
Unemployment Rate (%)***	2.8	2.6	2.6	3.2	3	3

Indicators: * Estimates   ** Forecast   *** Economic Planning Unit' s Estimates

Source: Malaysia. 2001e

This led to employment opportunities, particularly for women, being badly reduced. The employment expectations of the women in Malaysia are clearly different from men. Unemployment problem is usually measured based on the lack of employment among men. Additionally, women are normally the first bunch of workers to be disposed or retrenched during economic depression in the country [Ministry of Women Affairs and Family Development. 2002]. There is a continuous increase of unemployment rate among women since 1999 to 2001 [Malaysia. 2001g]. See Chart 2.

Chart 2: The Distribution Rate of Female Unemployment, 1990 - 2001
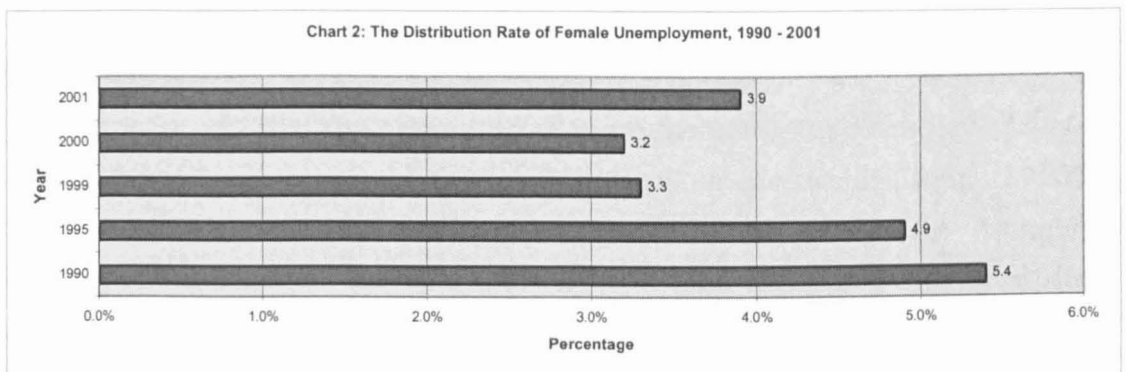
Source: Malaysia. 2001g

The following sub-topics are brief illuminations of the employment and marriage issues among women.

Age-Difference

Age is one of the most important variables in determining women's perspective to working. Younger women particularly those who are unmarried, are seen more to be involved in a paid work than their older group [Crinis. 2002]. Jamilah [1999] found a high employment participation rate among young adult women who are below 25 in age, who can be found mostly in the manufacturing sectors working as factory operators in the

country. This phenomenon reflected the absorption of young women into the lowest paid, unskilled employment offered by labour intensive manufacturing industries in the town centres [Intan. 1996].

In contrast when place of origin is linked to age factor, it reveals a different yet interesting phenomenon in Malaysia. The age differences in female participation rates between the rural and urban labour forces show that employment in the rural sectors was substantially higher, up to the age 65 [Jamilah. 2001]. It is due to the availability of kinsfolk networking at the rural area as well as the existence of petty industries such as producing salted fish and handicrafts that enable rural women to work until their old age [Hing and Rokiah. 1986: Jamilah. 1999]. It is not the same phenomenon to the women in the urban centre because obviously neither kinsfolk networking nor small business trading are available to them at certain age[19]. Most importantly, the employment preference relies on younger workers aged in between 18 to 34 years old to work in the factories [Jamilah. 2001], and denies access to older women.

Ethnic-Group

Starting in the 1970s, the setting up of manufacturing factories in Malaysia altered the economic pattern from agricultural to industrial [Kahn. 1998], which transformed the employment pattern, especially for women. Eventually, working at the manufacturing factories became the favourite working places especially among less educated, young Malay women to work in a low skilled job such as factory operators and assemblers [Chee. 1994].

Many Malay parents approved of their daughters working because these factories seem to be secure enough and thus suitable for women [Mazumdar. 1981]. The provisions of central accommodations to stay and the 'chauffeured-driven' buses to go to work for young women had appeased the worry of the parents [Crinis. 2002]. In the end, even though their daughters are away from them at least they had peace of mind thinking about their daughters' security and modesty [Amriah. 1993]. This particular scenario

[19] For example, it is already difficult for women to receive credit facilities to venture in business, but it is most hard for older women to apply because the banking institutions do not think they are potentially able to cope with the business [Nik Safiah. 1992].

showed that Malay daughters were relatively under the protection of their parents and elderly.

The Chinese and Indian women were less attracted to factory settings, yet when they did work, they were usually situated in slightly better and skilled positions than the Malays, normally as supervisors and administrators of the factory [Lie and Lund. 1994].

Women and Migration

Industrialisation changes the composition of the labour force. With the setting up of manufacturing factories and offices, women were encouraged to migrate and work in the urban areas [Salih. 1985]. There was an increasing evidence of single, young Malay women aged between 15 to 29 years old, migrating from the rural areas to town centres for economic reasons [United Nations. 1999a]. The fundamental changes in women's enhanced role in the development process have increased their mobility in the workforce [Asian Development Bank. 1998]. The establishment of labour intensive multinational industries in town areas after the 1970s has attracted a high proportion of young rural women to towns and incorporated them into the semi-urbanised labour force. Realising that rural poverty was rampant among certain ethnic groups, starting from the 1970s the Malaysian Government encouraged the migration of rural people to take up the employment, that is usually available in the town centres [Malaysia. 2000: 1983: 1975].

The phenomenon of young female Malay rural-to-urban migration in the 1970s and 1980s was particularly significant because it signalled a change in previously established societal norms against the movement of unaccompanied young women. A number of population and migration studies of Malaysian women indicate that the key reasons for the rural women to migrate are to seek employment, obtain independence, and remit money home [Jamilah. 1994a]. This phenomenon showed the transformation of the traditional values towards modernisation. The ideological clash between traditionalism and modernism has persistently shaped women's attitude towards employment and family. Further discussion is elaborated in

later chapters, but suffice to say here that these issues are complicated to resolve.

The profile of female migration in Malaysia is characterised by two distinct groups. The first one comprises young females between 15 and 24 years of age with less education but high levels of labour force participation in the service and production-related occupations. The second group comprises relatively older women mostly aged of 25 to 34 years, who are highly educated and have formal employment in the professional and administrative jobs[20] [United Nations. 1999b].

It is reported that the female age and rural-urban migration are closely linked. Based on an old data in 1976, female participation in the urban labour force showed a sharp drop after the age group 20-24, from 59 per cent to 45.7 per cent, and thereafter declined slowly but steadily up to the age group 60-64. The percentage of women in the rural area showed a modest drop in the 25-29 year group presumably due to marriage and childminding responsibilities. It then rose again at an average mean of 56 per cent and stayed there for all age groups, before finally dropped at the age of 55 and above. Men of both types of location on the other hand showed almost the same pattern throughout the ages until finally decreasing at the age of 60-64. See Table 6.

Table 6: The Labour Force Participation Rate by Age, Sex and Residence in 1976

Age	Female		Male	
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
15-19	40.1	35.2	47.8	54.4
20-24	59.0	51.7	92.0	91.4
25-29	45.7	45.9	98.3	98.1
30-34	43.7	50.9	98.4	98.9
35-39	41.0	56.1	99.1	98.7
40-44	35.5	58.0	98.7	98.9
45-49	31.8	60.1	96.5	98.4
50-54	25.6	57.6	93.8	95.8
55-59	25.1	41.1	75.3	86.0
60-64	17.5	34.9	59.1	73.8

Source: Malaysia. 1980a

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[20] In explaining this situation, it is important to look at the Malaysian educational structure. Normally, it takes more than 17 years for a Malaysian student to finish her or his formal education before gaining the bachelor's degree. Therefore pupils will start schooling at the age of 7 years and finally may receive their first degree at the age of 24 years old. Students need to complete six years in their Primary Level, then immediately continue to Secondary Level for five years. They need to sit for a national examination known as Malaysian Certificate of Education (or most commonly known as SPM) at the age of 17, which is the equivalent to British standard O Level. If they satisfy a certain high aggregate calculation, they might be accepted to matriculation centres for two years. Upon successfully completed the study there, they finally may be accepted to be enrolled to the university to take a four-year bachelor's programme. Alternatively, they may continue to the upper secondary level for another two years to take Malaysian Higher Certificate of Education (or STPM), which is equivalent to British standard A Level, in which they do not need to undergo the two years matriculation programme.

Although there is no such recent study of the same scale, the three decades old female employment participation pattern as shown in Table 6 conforms to the known differences in the employment opportunities between the rural and urban areas. The most available job in which women were involved in the urban employment was factory operators. Even so, it had only become available on a large scale in the 1970s, and was mainly lowly paid in which young women were preferred. These developed a substantial population of young women migrants in and around those towns where the manufacturing and service industries were concentrated. It was therefore natural that the participation rate amongst those young women should be high since it was mainly the availability of paid employment that attracted them from the rural areas.

Marital Status and Fertility Rate

Previous findings reported by Seager and Olson [1986] showed female waged employment in the developing countries tended to raise the marrying age for women and reduced the number of women between 15 and 19 years old getting married. This means that more women in the developing countries take longer time to get married than previously [United Nations. 1999b]. Seager and Olson [1986] also reported that Malaysia is among the lowest rate of below 10 per cent of that age range to have an early marriage due to careerism. To compare with the trajectory of the developed countries, only 1 per cent of women between 15 and 19 years old in UK and about 4 per cent of women of the same age range in the US were married [United Nations. 2000]. Whether or not careerism was the factor in UK and the US is unknown, but evidently the tendency of Malaysian women not to marry young shows the same pattern as in the developed countries.

Malaysian women seem to be delaying marriage for work [The New Straits Times. 8th November 2001][21]. Before 1980, there were 49 per cent of women aged 20-24 years who have never married [Malaysia. 1980a]. The latest Home and Population Census 2000 [Malaysia. 2001d] revealed that between the years 1970 to 2000 the overall mean age at marriage of Malaysian women

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[21] Many factors delayed women in establishing their marriage, among them are to be freed from domestic commitments and satisfied with life.

increased from 22.3 years in 1970 to 23.6 in 1985. Then it has further increased from 24.7 years old in 1991 to 25.1 years old in 2000, whilst men on the other hand are 28.6 years old and 28.2 years old within the same period.

Probably, as the direct result of seemingly over burden domestic affairs, the household size has immensely decreased since 1980 [ILO.1977]. According to Jamilah [1999], between 1974 and 1983 women with seven or more children declined from 22.3 per cent to merely 8.3 per cent. During the same period, the proportion of women with three and less children increased from 40.2 per cent to 52.7 per cent. The phenomenon indicates women's choice to have a smaller number of children. On the whole, the average number of children born to a woman at the completion of childbearing age fell from 6.7 in 1957 to 3.3 in 1993 [Malaysia. 2000].

As fertility decline has taken place in both urban and rural areas. However, the 1988 Malaysian Life Survey indicates that rural women have on average a larger family size than their urban counterparts [Jamilah. 1999]. The current trend of fertility decline experienced in Malaysia is largely the result of a rapid socio-economic development in the country. The data from population censuses and household surveys show that among the three ethnic groups, the mean age at marriage is the highest among the Chinese and Indians of about 26 years old, then followed by the Malays of 24 years old. Whereas the mean age at marriage for women in East Malaysia is about two years lower than their counterparts in Peninsular Malaysia [Jamilah. 1992b]. The Chinese women constituted the highest proportion of those who remain unmarried with 14.6 per cent followed by the Indians with 11.8 per cent and the Malays with 9.1 per cent [Jamilah. 1999].

Although marriage remains nearly universal and has great relevance for family life, women worldwide tend to marry at somewhat later stages, an average between 24 and 26 years [United Nations. 1999b]. It is suggested that a greater access to education, employment opportunities and exposure to urban, modern living have contributed significantly to delaying marriage among women and to changing patterns of family formations.

Women's education is by far the most important determinant of fertility, as shown by the sharp differentials in the number of children ever born to women of different educational levels. Subsequently, as the primary education is becoming universal in Malaysia, and more women are pushed into higher education, family size can be expected to drop further, thereby reaffirming the established pattern of the marriage formation among the developed Western countries. According to Jamilah [1999], women with more than 12 years of schooling have fewer children. On average, 1.8 children are born to this group as compared with 4.9 among those with no schooling [Jamilah. 1999].

Having considered the demographic profiles of women in Malaysia, the next issue is to explore the economic situations of the country that concerned women's life.

Women in the Workforce in Malaysia since Independence
In analysing the situation of women in Malaysia, it is found that pre-independence Malay women were involved in economic activities that sustained the household. Women worked together with men in planting and harvesting the crops such as rice. They also tended domestic animals, sewed clothes and prepared foods either for personal consumption or trading. Malay women were traditionally economically active, and it was not unusual to see women conducting trade at the market places around the country [Raja Rohani. 1991]. Historical documents described Malay women as active producers within a clearly defined division of work according to sex. In fishing communities in the East Coast, women were described as active traders often producing the commodities they sell and acting as treasurer of the house [Firth. 1966]. The present day Malaysian women, especially in the East Coast states of Terengganu and Kelantan share the same economic inclination as before [Abdullah and Muhammad. 1982].

Starting from the colonial period, the life of Malay women started to change. Previous studies on the effect of colonialism on women's life illustrated how gender differences in labour productivity increased under colonial rule [Boserup. 1970]. Men learned new mechanised farming techniques that left their women counterparts unskilled [Jomo and Tan. 1990: Lie and Lund.

1994]. In education, when it was equally open to everybody, gender differences were manifested in formal schools and extension courses, usually in line with European rather than indigenous norms [Manderson. 1980]. In forms of property-possession, Malay women under the British colonialism lost their right to land[22] through the formal legislation of land-titles [Fett. 1983: Stivens. 1998a: 1985].

However, the period of industrialisation has greatly affected the life of women in Malaysia particularly in the 1970s. International companies were looking for developing countries including Malaysia that offered cheap labour [Ackerman. 1980]. Apart from getting raw materials and low production costs, another main motive for establishing factories in Malaysia was to gain a foothold in Southeast Asia, thereby gaining access to an important and expanding regional market [Gomez and Jomo. 1997].

The use of female labour in production work in Southeast Asia is largely explained by the fact that the pay level is lower for females that for males [Elson and Pearson. 1981a]. Specifically in Malaysia, women possess qualifications that are highly valued by the owners of the industrial companies. Not only they are normally well educated they are also willing to do low skilled jobs [Lie and Lund. 1994]. Although males have reached the same educational level, they would not consider a similar low paying job, as women do. It has been argued that the skills gained through their socialisation such as endurance, obedience and punctuality qualified women better than men at these jobs [Elson and Pearson. 1981a].

The overall picture of employment pattern by gender in Malaysia shows a markedly lower participation of females than males in every year [Fisk and Osman-Rani. 1982: Malaysia. 1980b: 1975: 1970]. The trajectory of the labour force participation rate by gender in 1957 to 2000, which is presented in Table 7, shows the same turn, whereby women workers are still at half the proportion of men.

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[22] Fett [1983] examines the historical perspective on the position of women in Negeri Sembilan i.e. one of the states in Malaysia that has a unique cultural characteristic that maintains matrilineal law, and thus formally grants to women a considerable power. Change in land tenure following from the registration of land with the colonial government is examined for the period 1900 to 1977. Perhaps, collectively women in 1977 owned more land than any other period. However women's individual shares in the resource has declined, and in consequence women have increasingly lost their economic independence.

Table 7: The Total Labour Force Participation Rate by Gender in Malaysia, 1957 – 2000

Year	Female (%)	Male (%)
1957*	30.8	88.7
1970*	37.2	79.3
1975*	47.3	86.0
1976*	46.1	85.3
1980**	42.2	84.8
1991**	47.8	85.3
1995***	44.7	84.3
1996***	45.8	84.8
1997***	47.4	85.7
1998***	44.2	83.4
2000***	44.5	85.4
2001***	45.7	86.7

Source: * Malaysia. 1976: 1975: 1970: 1957 (only Peninsular Malaysia)
** Malaysia. 1991c: 1980a: 1980b
*** Malaysia. 2001b: 2001e

The report made by the United Nations [1995a] indicated that at each age group, women workers in Malaysia have lower labour force participation rates than men. See Table 8 for details.

Table 8: The Labour Force Participation Rate by Age Group and Gender in Malaysia, 1992

Age	Female	Male
15-19	29.0	40.0
20-24	65.0	90.0
25-29	58.0	99.5
30-34	56.0	99.9
35-39	55.0	99.9
40-44	54.0	99.9
45-49	54.5	99.7
50-54	40.0	92.0
55-59	30.0	72.0
60+	20.0	60.0

Source: United Nations. 1995a.

The highest level of women's employment participation is in the age group between 20-24 (65 per cent). Although the percentage of women's labour force participation gradually lowers down after the age of 24, it is still considerable with a steady rate of more than 54 per cent of women involved in employment. The percentage of female participation only really drops at 50 years old. Contrarily, although male participation at the age group between 20-29 is also high, their involvement in the labour force is at the highest peak at the age group between 30-44, and only decreases above the age 55.

There are a few possible explanations to describe the age group difference to start working between female and male workers. Immediately after completing a formal schooling and unable to continue education further, a flock of single, young women immediately joined the labour force, especially when there were many job offerings specially made to attract them to work in the manufacturing sectors [Jamilah. 1995]. The percentage was slightly

reduced as women aged above 24 might have started to get married and have children. Men on the other hand, after completing their education, would also start to work. In fact, men's employment participation showed a steady high percentage throughout all age groups, especially at the age between 30-34 years old. Apparently most males start to get married at this age and thus need to work to support their family [Siti Rohani. 1991].

In addition, the declining working participation at 50 years old by females is due to the existence of an optional civil service scheme for them to stop working at that age, which does not apply to men. This becomes compulsory when they reach 55 years of age[23]. The Government believed that workers should be given more time with the family as well as to provide job opportunity to younger substitutes [Wee. 1997]. They received pension money monthly (roughly equivalent to a half of what they received when they were on the job). Most of them do not continue to work. Those who work beyond the age of 55 may be operating small businesses or other odd job works. This scenario has noticeably showed the role of the Government in influencing the working pattern in Malaysia.

The progression of the economy in Malaysia from an agricultural stage to its increasingly developing form has been accompanied by important changes in the distribution of the labour force. Due to this economic structure, women are seen to be more involved in employment. The latest figure has seen the number of women employed increase from 30.8 per cent in 1957 to 45.7 per cent in 2001 as shown in Table 7 [Malaysia. 2002]. However, women's participation in Malaysian employment is still lower than the more developed countries. Though the participation can involve different hours of working, statistics from the OECD [1999] indicated that among the developed nations, Sweden has the highest participation rate of 74.5 per cent. Then it followed by the US (74.3 per cent), Switzerland (69.4 per cent), the UK (66.8 per cent), Australia (64.7 per cent), Japan (63.7 per cent) and South Korea (54.8 per cent).

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[23] The compulsory age to stop working for both gender categories was at 55 years old but there were few recent changes made whereby the maximum working age has been increased to 57 years old. Unless men can produce valid reason such as due to poor health condition, the provision of an optional pension scheme is given only for women.

Malay participation in the workforce can be institutionally compartmentalised according to gender, which leaves women doing mostly the low ranking job such as in the manufacturing and production works.

Women in Manufacturing and Production Line

Throughout the history of Malaysian independence, the Government has claimed to create avenues that enable its citizens to participate in the development of the nation. The situation has been clearly shown from the stages and processes of the New Economic Policy (NEP) to Malaysian Economic Plan (MEP) from as early as 1950s until today. The bilateral agreement of the Free Trade or Export Processing Zones (EPZs) in the Third World countries enables multinational firms to transfer part of the labour intensive production process to areas where labourers are cheap[24] [Halim et. al. 2001]. This process has become known as the "new international division of labour" [Elson and Pearson. 1989]. One of the many implications of the formation of this new international trade zones was an employment segregation based on gender.

The Malaysian Government has taken various measures to develop manufacturing industry by providing several incentives such as tax-free holidays for industrial enterprises located in the Free Trade Zones (FTZs) [Ramtohul. 2000]. It also commenced a strong industry promotion drive to attract foreign investment for the establishment of industrial factories in Malaysia. When the country embarked on its export-oriented industrialisation programme in 1970s, the employment pattern began to change gradually.

The Government advertising agencies promoted women for their *"docile persona and nimble fingers"* [Kaur. 2000; 225] in its effort to attract overseas manufacturing investments. As part of the New Economic Policy, the Government has made rigorous attempts to attract women into the economy. As a result, there have been dramatic increases in the share of women workers in manufacturing and clerical occupations [Lim. 1990]. However, feminists saw this scenario as gender subordination under a patriarchal

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[24] Even though today's labour cost in Malaysia is no longer cheap as previously, it still attracts foreign companies and factories due to the stability of the country and consistency of the laws [Malaysia. 2001e].

structure, and thus refused to recognise any benefits from employment in export factories to women in the Third World. They insisted that such employment intensified rather than alleviated women's disadvantaged social status [Elson. 1996: Elson and Pearson. 1981a: 1981b: Pearson. 1998].

Women's increased participation in manufacturing reflects certain peculiarities of the Malaysian industrial structure. It is pertinent to point out that the manufacturing sector is heavily gender segmented. When it comes to the use of female labour, it is found that the most mechanised industries employed only male workers. Women work within the least mechanised parts of production, which are usually defined as unskilled, often being manual and repetitive [Chee. 1994: Hing and Rokiah. 1986: Intan. 1996]. However, their participation is concentrated in low paid and manual work. In various literatures, women workers are reported to suffer arduous and monotonous work in poor conditions for low wages [Jamilah et. al. 1996: 1980: Ku Shamsulbahriah. 1994], which are fitting to describe the majority of women workers in manufacturing sectors.

The rationale for engaging a large pool of women in world market factories is primarily economic. The type of jobs women do is seldom paid by the hour but mostly according to the production cycle. It means that they are paid precisely for what they produce [McAllister. 1990: Ramtohul. 2000]. Women have been represented as valuable labourers not only because they could be paid less but also because they produced more at a lower cost. They were also seen transient labour in such typically dead-end jobs. This happened probably because women workers did not consider their job as a long-life career [Rohana. 2003: 1988: 1986: Wee. 1997]. It is actually a perfect resolution with the company's principle. The company does not expect nor need a stability of employment for more than two to four years, as work is unskilled and there is little investment in the training [Abdullah. 1996: Halim et. al. 2001].

Additionally, other factors associated with gender differences undoubtedly enter the calculation. Women were made to believe that they should be in 'feminine' employment [Hing and Rokiah. 1986: Intan. 1996: Rohana. 1988]. According to Elson and Pearson [1981b], women's socialisation, talent in

needle works, embroidery and other domestic crafts and supposedly 'natural' aptitude for detailed handiwork, gives them an advantage over men in tasks requiring high levels of manual dexterity and accuracy. As a result of this stereotype definition at job in Malaysia, more women were employed in the textile, garment, electronics and food processing industries or in those industries, which required certain characteristics that were classified as 'feminine'. In order to attract foreign capital, the Malaysian Government has made the claim in its investment brochure, which says,

> *"The manual dexterity of the oriental female is famous. Her hands are small and she works with extreme care. Who therefore could be better qualified by nature and inheritance to contribute to the efficiency of a production line than the oriental girl?"*
> [Cited in Hing and Rokiah. 1986; 10]

Women factory workers in Malaysia are heavily stereotyped. They are supposed to have naturally nimble fingers, they are docile, compliant, and they do not get involved in trade union activity and are reluctant to go on strike. They are good workers, tolerant of routine, repetitive and monotonous tasks [Chee. 1994], which men abhor and shun. This natural flair possessed by women is said to be vital in production and manufacturing factories [Intan. 1996]. Moreover, the production tasks in Malaysian factories are designed for women, as they are more inclined to pay attention to the tiniest tasks and slower movement, as well as inspecting and putting things together [Rohana. 1986].

Additionally, women might face the natural disposability that happens when they leave to get married or have children, in which a factory may temporarily cut back on production by simply freezing their posts, thereby avoiding the burden of making compulsory redundancies [Elson and Pearson. 1981b]. In a situation of economic slump, factory management restructuring or profit-rolling difficulty, women can be the first group of workers to go. This is due to their lack of technical expertise, minimum skills to be used and valued by the company [Wee. 1997].

Although women workers may have experienced difficulty and uncomfortable conditions in the manufacturing factories, a strong attraction to live in the city and to own money contributed to their voluntary involvement in the manufacturing and production sector.

The expansion of industrialisation in the 1980s in Malaysia whereby many foreign factories were established that required human labourers, particularly among women, explained the change in the employment sectors [McGee and Linge. 1986]. Accompanying this trend were the overall worldwide shifts in the employment structure from the manufacturing sector to services sector in the developed countries [Dale and Glover. 1990], and from agriculture to manufacturing and services in the developing countries [Intan. 1996: Kerr. 1983].

Looking distinctively at the occupational distribution among women workers in Malaysia, the majority of them, especially in the 1950s to early 1980s were concentrated in the agricultural activities only to be slowly replaced by the production-related activities [Malaysia. 2001a]. The declining level of employment in the agricultural sector was intensified by the heavy out-migration of the younger population from villages and remote areas around Malaysia. This group constituted the age group of between 15 to 24 years that came from agricultural jobs to relatively more urbanised occupations that offered better earning prospects and a higher standard of living [United Nations. 1999b: 1999c].

The importance of agriculture to women's employment has decreased over time. In 1957, there were more than 80 per cent of women in this sector, then decreased to 62 per cent and 49 per cent in 1970s and 1980s respectively and at less than 31 per cent in 1987. On the other hand, within the same year, other sectors such as communication and services drew more women who made up the total employment distribution of the country with 20 per cent and 27 per cent respectively [Malaysia. 1991a].

It is important to note that the decline in the percentage of women's participation in the agricultural sector can also be investigated from a different point of view. Although it is true that lesser agricultural job commitment among the local people occurred, it did not mean that agricultural activities simply vanished. A new trend took place in the 1980s whereby Indonesian immigrant workers were hired on a large scale. This happens because local young women (also local young men) were disinclined to work in the so-called 'unattractive', lesser-protected, lower pay of the

agricultural sector than the offers made by the manufacturing sector [Wee. 1997]. According to the ILO, Malaysia has an estimated 1.8 million foreign workers of who may have only travel documents with no working permit [Jones. 2000b].

The importance of agricultural sector has been replaced by the manufacturing industry. A recent report showed that 22.7 per cent of women workers are now in the manufacturing sector [Ministry of Women Affairs and Family Development. 2002]. Though there has been a slight drop since the 1990s, the manufacturing sector still absorbs the largest share of women workers. Although females are increasingly found in the production and manufacturing industries, this is not indicative of actual occupation. It appears that a large percentage of women are employed as clerical and support group to ensure that production function is fully facilitated. Further information on women in the workforce is summarised in Table 9.

Table 9: The Percentage of Employment Distribution of Women Workers by Industry in Malaysia, 1957 - 2000

Year	Source/ Age	Agricult ural	Mining	Manufa cturing	Utilities	Constru ction	Commu nicatio n	Transpo rtation	Service	Finance	Others	Total
1957/60*	C10/15+	80.4	1.3	3.7	0.1	0.8	3.1	0.3	9.8	-	0.5	100
1970*	C/10+	61.6	0.7	7.3	0.1	0.4	5.2	0.5	14.7	-	9.5	100
1980*	C10/10+	44.4	0.3	14.7	-	0.9	11.5	0.6	17.6	-	10.0	100
1987*	LF/15-64	30.8	0.2	20.2	0.1	0.8	19.6	1.2	27.1	-	-	100
1995**	-	16.9	0.2	29.4	0.2	1.5	-	1.7	20.5	5.6	24.0	100
2000**	-	14.1	0.1	27.3	0.1	1.6	-	1.7	22.3	5.7	27.1	100

Indicator:
i.   C – Census
ii.   C10 – Data on Malaysia, include Peninsular Malaysia (population over 10 years) and Sabah and Sarawak (population over 15 years) in 1960
iii. LF – Labour Force Survey
iv. Age – The number on the right indicates the age of the population in these censuses or surveys

Source: * ILO [1989: 1985: 1983: 1978: 1977: 1960]
        ** Malaysia. 2001a

From 1987 to 2000, there was a slight decline of women in the manufacturing sector, which has seen women's participation in employment dispersed into professional, clerical, sales and services sectors. Jomo [1990] reported that since 1957 to 1970, white-collar occupations such as professionals, clerical, sales and service have been increasingly attractive to women compared to agricultural and production occupational types. See Table 10.

Table 10: The Percentage of Employment Distribution of Women Workers by Occupations in Malaysia, 1957 - 2000

Year	Professional	Administration	Clerical	Sales	Agricultural	Production-Related	Service	Other	Total
1957	3.5	0.1	0.9	3.4	75.9	8.5	7.3	0.4	100
1970	5.2	0.1	3.9	4.9	58.0	11.0	8.7	8.2	100
1980	7.9	0.4	11.0	8.7	39.0	21.5	11.5	-	100
1987	10.3	0.6	14.4	12.1	25.8	21.5	15.3	-	100
2000*	13.6	2.3	17.7	12.2	13.9	22.7	17.6	-	100

Source: ILO [1989: 1895: 1983: 1978: 1977: 1960]
  * Ministry of Women Affairs and Family Development. 2002

Female participation in the professional, technical and related works showed higher participation than male with 13.5 per cent for female and 8.4 per cent for male in 1995. However, the categorisation of the professional and technical sectors includes architecture, accountancy, auditing, engineering, medicine, dentistry, veterinary, surgery, laws, and also teaching and nursing [ILO. 1989], and the literature shows that women are not employed in the same professional occupations as men, with the exception of their involvement in teaching and nursing[25] [Jamilah et. al. 1996].

Women's modernised attitude towards employment is evident. Not only has the percentage of women increased in the labour force, they also have moved into different occupations.

Women Workers, Economic Trend and Home

There is a tendency to perceive women as resources to be utilised for the needs of the Government rather than the Government responding to the need and potential of women as human beings. The recent decline in the population, which occurred in Malaysia[26], has been looked at as a drop in economic productivity rather than looking at the impact for the family structure.

Little public institutional supports and changes emerge in the sex-roles within the family. The Government, except for the purposes of family planning, has traditionally seen reproduction and marriage as 'private'. The justification for the population policy is based on the argument that heavy industrialisation is the next phase of development for Malaysia to become a newly industrialised country. Heavy industries in turn required a large

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[25] The majority of the female professional group constituted in the occupations such as teachers, lecturers and nurses, which are considered as women's jobs that bear the feminine side of caring and taking care the needs of others [Jamilah et. al. 1996].
[26] The latest census figures showed that even though the growth rate among the Malays remained stable, the Chinese population had dropped from 28.1 per cent in 1991 to 26 per cent last year. A similar pattern also has shown among Indians with 7.9 per cent to 7.7 per cent respectively [Malaysia. 2001d].

domestic market, and thus increasing the size of population would help the nation to achieve its economic target.

Suggesting 70 million people as an appropriate population level indicates that Malaysian politicians clearly think that Malaysia is actually under-populated. With the increasing growth of the high technology and commercial industries, the nation is very much in need of a massive supply of labour force so that wage inflation can be avoided as competition among workers can minimise the wage rise that would lessen the burden of the Government. Simultaneously, the requirement for more population is due to the domestic market demand so that there should be enough people to buy the products that have been produced in the country.

Another way to see the problem is to trace down the previous employment trends in Malaysia. Women were thought to be transient workers who left the workforce after marriage [Rohana. 1988: 1986]. Furthermore, they have not considered being the main breadwinner of the family and as such their wages were considered supplementary [Rohana. 1997b]. A conventional notion of a woman's place being in the home has become a political issue in Malaysia [Sha'bah. 1997]. Local views have strongly encouraged those single women to get married as marriage is said to lead an individual to a 'healthy' lifestyle [Noraini. 2001: Rohana. 1988].

One stagnant factor that seems always be a part and parcel in curbing women's involvement in the labour force is the domestic responsibilities in the household. Even when women have jobs, they are expected by society to be fully responsible for the reproduction and care of the next generation. In Malaysia, while the participation of women in the economy is encouraged, and even becoming a necessity to the economy and to keep the household at a relatively comfortable standard of living, rigid sex-related responsibilities are still demanded by society [Tan and Ng. 1998].

It will therefore be interesting to know how female workers negotiate their career and family lives. Chapter Eight elaborates how employed women manage their private life. However, suffice to mention here that until now Malaysian women might have serious difficulties in facing the choice between

marriage and career. In one side, she needs to take care the family matters as stipulated by the society but on the other side she also needs to be involved in the employment due to social demands as well as economic requirement and psychological satisfaction. It is predicted that both are possible, as long as domestic servants and child-care facilities are easily available. Nevertheless, even though with good assistance of both, the professional women with young children still have the problem of reconciling these two responsibilities. The situation becomes more difficult as not all women can afford to pay for outside help to look after their children [Tengku Aizan. 1998].

Malaysian economic growth depends on the full participation of women in labour force. Yet in order to be able to attain it, women must be freed from the traditional domestic role of wife and mother. To illustrate the significance of this statement, Lee Kuan Yew (then Prime Minister of Singapore) viewed, *"Industrialisation required women workers {but} what had not taken place in traditional male-dominant Asian societies was the helping in housework by husbands. This change in social attitudes could not come by legislation"* [Josey. 1980; 261-261]. The same principles and arrangements have been consistently repeated in the speeches of other government leaders [Armstrong and McGee. 1985]. Most of them pointed out that educated females are needed for the nations to move up the technical ladder. It had to make maximum use of the available human resources, but there was hardly practical ways for women to get rid of the stigma of the traditional role.

Speaking about the issue, the Minister of Women Affairs and Family Development urged women to uplift their condition or else they are continually over-looked in the mainstream government agenda. She added that when these women cannot perform well, the perception of society is that they are not good enough, but the truth is there are underlying forces that prevent women from progressing [Malaysia. 2002].

The rising trend of working mothers in the paid workforce has implications not only on the quality of family life, but also the gender division of housework and childcare issues. This trend together with the reduction in fertility and the rising levels of life expectancy and trend delayed age of

having the first child also have a significant impact on changes in the family life cycle.

Women Workers and Domestic Issue

So far, one can digest the idea that the decline of fertility among Malaysian women in recent years is mainly due to a rise in the age of marriage [Jones. 1981]. Existing studies show that most female workers in Malaysia do not stop work upon marriage, but they do so due to the dual-role burden imposed by motherhood [Jamilah. 1992a]. Some women might have to stop working due to the existence befit social sanctions that small children need their mother during their growing up process [Sha'bah. 1997: Siti Rohani. 1991] however, some of them just want to establish a close and regular contact with their children [Noraini. 2001]. Another study found that some women want to stop working for the benefits of their children, but they cannot do so due to the need to sustain the family income [Tan and Ng. 1998]. These are similar to the experiences and issues faced by women in Western countries [Brannen and Moss. 1988: Kauppinen and Gordon. 1997: Marsh and Arber. 1992].

The scenario that young women workers in Malaysia are delaying marriage might be a sign of resistance against the 'double-day', which for many of them is a trademark of married life [Amin et. al. 1998: Tan and Ng. 1998]. The decreasing functional help of the kinsfolk requires modern, urban couples to rely on each other. Yet some husbands are not so inclined to help the wives [Aminah and Narimah. 1992].

The existence of men in a household increases women's domestic responsibility [Wyatt et. al. 1985]. In the same way, the presence (or absence) of children, their number and age increase women's time spent in doing house chores [Stichter and Parpart. 1990]. A woman as a wife, a mother and a manager of a family might face difficulty to settle in her roles together. Whatever the situation is, the domestic affairs are seemingly a very tiring business for women. Although the above findings are based from the Western experiences, this study is in view that Malaysian women encounter the same situation.

Understandably, the increased cost of living and urban development have forced many urban families in Malaysia to depend on two incomes. In general, most Malaysian husbands do not object their wives to work outside the home because they bring in much needed financial supplement into the household income [Stivens. 2000: 1998a: 1998b: Wilson. 1987]. However, home management and child-care remain the chief responsibility of the mother and not the father, especially among Malaysian women [Jamilah. 1992b: Noraini. 2001]. Delamont [2001] cited almost the same marital attitude among women in the UK.

More women in Malaysia are seen working nowadays. The reasons might be various. To some, it might be to apply what they have learnt into practice, others might take it to add extra income for the family, or it is more a way of establishing social companionship, or even to liberate themselves from the endless domestic affairs. These are among the reasons that might have shaped the modern Malaysian household structure. The 'dual-role' burden of being a mother and worker is still a confronting issue in women's life Jamilah. 1999: Noraini. 2001: Mazumdar. 1981].

Conclusion

Colonialism and industrialism transformed women in Malaysia. Increased education, delayed marriage, decreased fertility and the influences of westernisation are among the changes that have affected the life of women. After achieving political independence in 31st August 1957, Malaysia advanced ahead in competing with the development of industrialisation. The patterns and trends of women's labour force participation in Malaysia have changed since then. The demographic profile of Malaysian women shows that young, rural, uneducated, unmarried, Malay women were attracted to work in manufacturing and production sectors. In fact, these sectors have minimised the agricultural sector, which had been the main employment sector since 1950s and earlier.

The employment rate for married women increases with income [Horton. 1996]. It means that those married women who stayed on working tended to have higher educational and social backgrounds. It is believed that women who spent most of their adult time learning and gaining skills would most

probably be eager to apply them appropriately at the workplace. In addition, for the nature of jobs offered, it seems that women in dead-end jobs are the most likely to discontinue work, whereas those in jobs which are perceived to offer a good chance for occupational mobility are more likely to continue working [Horton. 1996]. For that reason, the professional job, highly skilled, high paying and the so-called high-ranking jobs such as in engineering would be significant factors for women to continue working.

The development of Malaysian economic experienced fluctuations, which significantly determined the employment pattern in the country. Although there is an enormous need to maximise women's credibility and energy in the employment sector, their absorption in it has been seen as purely economical.

There are three main factors that have contributed to the advancement in women's economic status in Malaysia. Firstly, the rapid expansion of educational facilities and equal access of males and females to all levels of formal education. As a result of modernisation and greater opportunities to acquire higher educational qualifications, some women were adamant in pursuing their career. Secondly, the rapid pace of economic development and industrialisation in Malaysia since the 1970s. This process has created many new urban areas especially in the service sector and the labour-intensive industries. Thirdly, the implementation of the New Economic Policies in 1970, which encouraged the participation of the rural Malays in the modern and formal sector including the government service. Due to this policy, there has been transition from unpaid rural economic activities to wage employment in the urban industrial sector particularly among Malay women. As women became integrated into economy, women's work outside the home has shifted from being mere supplementary income[27] to being a necessary earning for the family's welfare and living.

This chapter has looked at the historical account of women's employment patterns and trends in Malaysian from 1957 to 2003. The social change and the economic transformation gave women the opportunity to excel in

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[27] In fact, the concept of the 'supplementary income' in itself has always been a fallacy to single mothers and widows who are forced to support their family full time.

education, and consequently to have greater participation in the work force. However, this leads to greater potential conflicts over roles and responsibilities between work and family. The next chapter elaborates the employment picture of Malaysia by selecting PetCo as the research site.

Introduction

This chapter introduces the readers to the company, which is used for this study. It sketches the management features, the recent policies and structure of PetCo that are relevant to its female employees.

A Company Profile

PetCo has many business branches in various areas in the West and East Malaysia. However, I purposely chose three main sites of the company. The rationale behind this selection was mainly due to the time and distance constraints[29]. Barat, Selatan and Timur are the pseudonym names of the three states of Malaysia, where this study was carried out. For the discussion, this study identifies each site as PetCo Barat, PetCo Selatan and PetCo Timur.

This research project investigates some problems faced by the employed women, both single and married, in the workplace and home. PetCo was chosen as the case study mainly due to the fact it employs many local workforces in Malaysia. It is reported that currently PetCo has over 20,000 employees in Malaysia supporting its various businesses and operations. According to its Human Resource officer, about one-third of these employees have been working with the company for more than 15 years.

Another reason was more to do with personal inclination to get first-hand experience inside a large company like PetCo. At least two of my family members and some of my closest friends are employees of PetCo, while some others are my friends who are under PetCo's scholarships and soon after finishing their study will be working with the company. In addition, I have also heard a lot of compliments about the company such as the employment security and financial stability for those who are working with PetCo. Undeniably when these PetCo employees and those who are related to it talked about PetCo, they speak with pride.

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[28] PetCo is a pseudonym company name that I used in this study.
[29] The size of Malaysia is approximately 329,757 km², which consists of fourteen independent states.

Organisational Structure

Like any other multinational corporation, the philosophy of PetCo is to operate as a business organisation guided by a complementary set of mission, vision and values. The mission of PetCo is to establish a business in the petroleum industry with the primary responsibility to develop and add value to natural resources, and subsequently contribute to the well being of the people and the nation. Its vision is to be a leader of the petroleum industry both locally and internationally. The values of PetCo embody loyalty, professionalism, integrity and cohesiveness as the company policy that is shared by every employee. These three items were printed on glossy papers, and could be seen at each office of PetCo. They have become the sanctified axiom of the company.

The organisational hierarchy starts with the Board of Directors, followed by the Management Committee, which are headed by the President and Chief Executive Officer. Further down under this level, are the office divisions that include administration, development, education, finance, legal corporate affairs and businesses. The bottom part of the chart is the compartmentalisation of various sites and plants.

At the moment, PetCo has 62 wholly owned corporations, 19 partly owned subsidiaries and 47 associated companies. Most of the wholly owned corporations have been diversified to smaller offices in the country and abroad. For this project, I managed to go to six of these 'mother' companies. The partly owned subsidiaries are those companies in which PetCo has more than 60 per cent share investment, which I conducted my research in five of them. In associated companies where PetCo has less than 50 per cent of share investment, I had access to another five offices.

With a distinctive nature of each company, getting basic demographic information proved to be difficult. There is so much bureaucratic red tape, which stopped me getting detailed background data. It proved to be difficult to get the official employee profile in the company. For example, I did not know the exact number of its female employees.

The routine working time at PetCo is five days a week from 8:00am to 5:00pm. However, there is a slight difference for the working days among the sites. The working schedule at PetCo Barat and PetCo Selatan is from Monday to Friday, but at PetCo Timur is from Sunday to Thursday. Situated in one of the strongest Islamic-influenced State in the country, PetCo Timur follows the official Friday holiday declared by the State Government.

Promotions and Benefits

In line with the company's policy of "shared responsibility", each employee is expected to excel in personal and professional growth. As newly appointed PetCo employees, they will be exposed to training and development courses. Among them are the New Entrant Orientation Programme, Mentoring Course, Performance Planning and Appraisal Scheme, Skill Enhancement Training and Opportunity for Staff Development. Programme. I had several casual conversations with PetCo's employees in which many of them would say that the company has provided career progression and development opportunities that they found appealing in their work life. Moreover, many employees would admit that the comprehensive benefits such as loans for housing and vehicles, payment for maternity, dental, medicine and hospitalisation, financial plans for retirement and life insurance make the company very attractive as an employer.

A life of an employee at PetCo depends on certain job-grade. Normally, fresh graduates will be at job-grade 20, and may go higher up in the job rank. Depending on their performance, they may skip to a higher level if their work has been graded as exceptional.

Apart from the job-grade scheme, a career promotion for PetCo employees is primarily dependent on the Performance Planning and Appraisal Scheme, which take place every October. The assessment rating scale, which is known as the Performance Development Appraisal (PDA), is based on the supervision evaluation. The section heads oversee employees' work performance before submitting to the Board of Appraisal Directors' Assessment meeting for individual increment. The employees will then receive an annual increment based on the company's rating system. The rating starts from the excellence scale 1, to scales 2, 3a, 3b, 4 and halts at

the poorest scale 5[30]. Based on this rating, the allotment of the salary increment is given to the employees. If it is 2 or 3a, they will receive 8 per cent or 10 per cent increment respectively for the next year. Apart from this assessment, a normal annual income increment will be distributed on January.

To be eligible for promotion, employees must have been working for three to seven years with the company. For example, an executive could be promoted to a senior executive. Being promoted as a senior level means that she should supervise a group of junior executives. After a couple of years, she might be appointed as a department manager. Nevertheless, all of these promotional stages are depending to the availability of the job. If her supervisor is still holding that position (probably due to not having been promoted to a higher level) she has to wait until the opportunity arrives. Although there are chances for promotion it heavily depends on seniority level, expertise and job performance as well as the availability of job vacancies.

An annual leave of 15 days are given to most employees, and they may get an increase of 5 days if they have worked for more than five years with the company. To some people, a half-month annual leave of the company is far too little. However, PetCo management justified its action by announcing that the company needs to make full use of the working days to prosper. The company further defends its short annual leave allocation is due to the provision of 5-working-day a week, especially when most other companies in Malaysia work 6 days per week. Other paid leave benefits are the 7-day marital leave and 60-day maternity leave. With a strong case such as to accompany husband for oversees assignments, a female employee can apply for an unpaid leave, usually up to a few years.

Another work benefits package at PetCo is the housing loan and car loan. Four per cent interest rate for the car loan is applicable that has to be paid within seven years. The calculation of the housing loan depends on the basic income, which then multiplies by 90. For example, if her basic income is RM2000, she qualifies for a house that is valued RM180000 or lower.

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[30] The normal standard scale is 3a.

An optional retirement scheme starts at the age 50 years old but becomes compulsory at the age of 55.

Education and Training Development

In line with the importance of education and the development of intellectual capacity in the nation, PetCo has, in 1998 formed an Education Division specially to oversee the effective implementation of educational and skill-training programmes to meet the company's need as well as to supply human power for the nation. Undeniably, PetCo has been one of the biggest sponsoring agencies in Malaysia. The company has started the sponsoring programme many years ago and has helped Malaysians to receive quality education from good universities both locally and abroad. Most PetCo scholarship recipients have resumed key positions in the company. Meanwhile, some others worked in the public and private sectors in the country.

The major task of the Education Division is to recognise experts in the petrochemicals industry particularly engineers, chemists, geologists, technicians and administrators to work for the company. This expert-supply assignment needs to be started at its early stage, that is, by identifying the most excellent and potential candidates. Among its many charges is to affiliate itself with the local secondary schools. As soon as the school authorities submit names of excellent students, particularly from the science academic stream to PetCo's Education Division, an interview session with these students will take place.

Once the selection has been finalised, most of these students will be asked to sit appropriate exams as instructed by the enrolment board of the universities that they are interested in. Students have to take the A-Level exam if they are interested to be in the UK universities. If other countries require a different set of examinations as their prerequisite entrance, another preparation will be conducted to suit the requirement. All branches of Engineering and Computer Technology are the technical courses whereas only Business Administration, Economics, Accountancy and Finance are the non-technical courses approved by PetCo's Education Sponsoring Unit.

While these students are studying abroad, they will be given a complete funding that covers the university fee and subsistence payment. Other entitlements are annual living allowance, books, instruments and project or thesis subsidy and other payments like clothing and settling-in allowance and end-of-study allowance. Moreover, these students may receive a computer loan from PetCo.

PetCo is not only committed to provide study opportunities to fresh undergraduates but offer candidates the chance to further their studies for Masters and Ph.D. degrees through the Staff Development Programme. The candidature criteria would largely depend on seniority as well as the importance of the course area to the company.

Women's Division

In relation to women, PetCo has established women's division known as PetWa, which is dedicated exclusively to all women working with the company. PetWa is an association of the female staff and the spouses of male staff. The membership of this association is voluntary, in which the members are asked to pay a lifetime payment fee. The position of PetWa's Chairman is given to the wife of the reigning CEO.

PetWa's major function is to organise talks on women's issues as well as conduct classes related to environment and social awareness. Classes on home decoration, cooking and handicraft skills are also popular among its members. Another function of PetWa is to participate in charity works for the needy around the country. An annual sport activities and family day organised by PetWa attracts female staff and the partners of the male staff to participate in the events. These events are held at different states around Malaysia. The expenditures that include accommodation, food and fuel (or flight fare) are completely paid by the company. One interviewee mentioned that these annual gatherings are very much looked forward to because it is the only time to get acquainted with other PetCo women. While enjoying the activities arranged by the organiser, they can also take pleasure from the company's holiday getaway.

Most of PetWa expenses come from the company itself. But a small sum also derives from the association's profit-making activities such as selling food products and craft items at the bazaar. At the time of investigation, PetWa has more than 3000 members. Its website informs of all PetCo's current and future events to PetWa's members. These events are also extended to the non-members (if they are interested).

Conclusion

This chapter was to introduce the readers to PetCo. The next chapters will discuss in details the process of data collection and analysis gathered from PetCo sites.

Introduction

In general, this research is about women, work and home in Malaysia, and I shall discuss the experiences, conditions and difficulties experienced by female workers at both work and home. However, my specific discussion is dedicated to married women in engineering. I am interested in engineering more than any other profession because for a decade now the Malaysian Government has insisted on having more engineers for the development of the nation. Consequently, there are increasing numbers of female engineers in the country.

In this chapter I shall discuss the strategies and techniques used in this research project. In this respect, I operationalise the work setting by selecting one specific job, which I thought would highlight the impact of gender in the workplace. I also tried to obtain enough data to investigate patriarchal elements in the chosen work setting.

To understand this situation, I needed access to a well-established high technology organisation, which employed women and admitted them to work at high positions. PetCo as a petrochemical company fits the pre-requisite. First, the company is widely acknowledged in providing gender equal opportunity working policies in Malaysia. Second, due to its semi-government status the company is an embodiment of both the private and the public sector, which might show a more flexible way for women's entrance to the workplace. Finally, the company is in the forefront of the high-tech industries, and hence may provide an easier access to women employees because they had not inherited long-standing gender stereotypes in organisational structures. Thus, the company was chosen as an exemplar of positive practice regarding women's employment.

Women who work in a high technology company like PetCo represent the minority of women who have the opportunity of being involved in the petrochemical industry, and furthermore have the chance to occupy high-ranking position as engineers and professionals.

A suggestion to include several organisations, such as an electric power corporation and an aviation organisation, for comparative case studies had to be abandoned due to their lack of response to the project. As time was greatly restricted in completing this study, I limited myself to PetCo.

> *"Often as not elite and powerful people, institutions are frequently able to deny access because they do not wish themselves or their decision-making processes to be studied. It is inconvenient, they are busy and wish to assert their rights to privacy and so on"* [Hornsby-Smith. 1993; 55].

It is worth putting this quote at the beginning of this section, as it is relevant throughout my research. I was never the 'powerful' researcher studying a powerless group of people. To some extent, I was and could have been seen as a subversive presence in conservative organisations because I seemed, for my research purposes to be questioning the status quo.

This study encompassed both qualitative and quantitative approaches in hoping to explore the issues in detail. In this study, I chose to use a multiple methodological operationalism employing several methods such as questionnaires, interviews, participant observation and diary content, so that any biases and weaknesses of any one method might be rectified by those of others [Blaikie. 1991: Dingwal. 1997]. The value of any sociological research may be questioned if a researcher only uses one type of tool [Shipman. 1988]. Quantitative methods alone may be unable to capture the issue of women, work and family, and thus interviews are best used to support the debate [Brannen and Moss. 1988: Denzin and Lincoln. 1994]. May [1997] views that *"the validity of an interview is greater than its disadvantageous position, as the depth of data collected can give a more thorough individualisation of a respondent's thought than a questionnaire"* [May. 1997; 109-131]. His views proved to be true, as the data obtained from the interviews strengthened the data acquired from the questionnaires. The participant observation enabled me to understand the physical setting and the working atmosphere of the company. Additionally, diaries were envisaged as a method that could facilitate more understanding about the life of female workers at home, but this had to be abandoned because of its time intensiveness.

To understand the experiences, conditions and difficulties experienced by the female workers at work and home, I had to conduct two sets of fieldwork. The first fieldwork with PetCo's female employees was derived from the three

major sources, which are the questionnaires, interviews and participant observation. The second fieldwork was with the people in authority, and exclusively relied on interviews. I will discuss why the diary content method proved a disappointment at length later.

The development of the methodologies in this study is mainly focussed on the questions of women, work and home. I followed the examples of the basic dos and don'ts spelt out by methodology gurus [Burgess. 1995: Gilbert. 1993: Oppenheim. 1992]. As I was developing my literature review chapter, I learned plenty of related questions on the issue from previous surveys, which I have replicated in my own survey. These related questions from the earlier sources helped me to construct better questions for my own research. Furthermore, I was assisted by some pilot studies, which saved me putting in many unproductive questions.

Even so, the research design took a long time to finalise. One important precaution in designing questions is to be aware of the locality in which the research will be conducted. Malaysian respondents may react differently to a question or term that seemed to be ordinary and harmless in nature to respondents in the UK. Further elaboration on this problem is explained in the following sections of this chapter.

Before specifying the format of each research technique applied, let me explain the method of diary content that I tried to apply but failed to do so.

Diary Content

A diary-method provides a better way to collect data about time use [Vandeweyer. 2001]. It was planned that a one-week diary form would be distributed to the interviewees. The objective was to ensure that I could give enough explanation and guidance before they were to fill-in the forms.

In the form, each interviewee was asked to write her activities, both the major and secondary, starting from the hour she awakes until she goes to sleep. Thus she will have to write about how she spends her time at the workplace and home during the weekdays, and the weekend (agreed between us). The motive in asking them to write their hourly activities was to gain

some generalisations about the working patterns of these women, at work and at home, and the amount of time spent in various activities.

A diary-method, which I had planned to apply, had to be abandoned due to the interviewees' disinclination to record their weekly activities. My interviewees asked to be excused filling-in the form due to lack of time at home. This situation made them a bit reluctant to co-operate [Gershuny et. al. 1994]. Their explanation is acceptable because it is a rarity to receive participants' consent to write their hourly daily activities. My participants had said that many household responsibilities were waiting for them once they reached home. Generally, even people without major family commitments could feel it arduous filling in such detail.

Looking at my participants' job commitments and realising their domestic responsibilities, I understood their refusal to fill-in the form. On the other hand, I also understood that the Malaysians in general would not reveal too much about their family affairs, particularly to an outsider like me. It is normal to see that family affairs are treated as a 'hush-hush' matter [Noraini. 2001]. Being identified as having a problematic family is something to be shunned, particularly among Malaysians [Jamilah. 2001]. Besides, by agreeing to fill-in the form, it means that their identity can be recognised more easily. They may be afraid that people will know the problems inside their family. The end result was that I had to discard the diary content method.

Apart from the unsuccessful attempt at the diary content method, the application of the questionnaire, interview and participant observation approach ran as planned.

Participant Observation

Gaining Access

The aim of the study was to know more about the working environment and organisational practices, together with the employment conditions of PetCo. My request to have data on the number of female workers at PetCo was denied because it was classified as confidential. But from my observation, it appears that most women are employed in administration. The majority are

in the clerical line while a handful of them are executives, such as those who are in charge human resources, audit and finance as well as the managerial section. Because I was accepted within the office premises, I could directly observe and consequently conclude that this phenomenon was common at all research sites.

Analysis

I executed an approach of categorising particular themes that could be observed in the company. The themes concentrate on gender relationships among the employees, the treatment received by female employees, as well as their normal job positions in the company. Any pertinent observations were inscribed in my diary. Later, I transferred these observations into a document-record, which I prepared in anticipation of the fieldwork stage. In all PetCo sites, I tried to maintain the sequence of themes to be observed so that a standardised analysis format could be achieved.

Each research site has a unique profile to talk about. With the corporate image that PetCo Barat has, most of its female workers have a modern outlook in terms of the issues of family and work. In contrast, the influence of an Islamic attitude is very obvious among female workers at PetCo Timur whereas the stance of female workers in PetCo Selatan seems to be more relaxed than the two former sites. Their unique features are important for this project. It is hoped that the inclusion of the three different settings may benefit this study. Below are brief observations of the working atmosphere at each research site.

i.   PetCo Barat

The main branch of the company is situated at the PetCo building in Barat. Apart from the existence of shopping complexes, well-known boutiques and leisure centres on the lower floors, most of the upper floors of the building belong to the PetCo group of companies.

A very stiff security at the building has been tightened since the September 11th attack. Employees and visitors need to place their identification tag against the touch-pad of the security metal barricade. A few metres ahead, an escalator brings them to PetCo's first floor. The next security measure is

to walk through the x-ray screening gate, where individual belongings are removed and placed on the moving rubber rail on the left, while keys and hand-phone are placed inside a small basket on the right. It feels just like passing a security gate system at any sophisticated international airport. Security guards can be seen everywhere. At least two of them are at the reception counter and another two are at the metal barricade and the x-ray gate.

Initial meetings proved to be difficult because the security guards insisted on me being fetched by the officer with whom I had appointments. After a discussion with PetCo's Human Resource Manager, I was given a daily tag pass holder that identified me as a researcher in the Human Resource Division. To get the tag pass I had to sign in, and similarly, I had to sign my name out, and return the pass to the security guard on a daily basis, while conducting the research at PetCo Barat[31].

After successfully passing these security checkpoints, I had to take two different elevators, which had been separated by two isolated sections. These split sections were arranged based on odd and even numbers. An obvious reason is due to the building's unique security system. The first elevator rides up to the 48th floor, then the second one, in the next hallway, brought me to the 55th floor. I have to confess that the first few rides really made me nauseous.

All the three offices of PetCo that I visited are open-plan offices with the partition-style of work setting. At PetCo Barat, the partitions are of a medium height that is just above one's shoulder. Most partitions are the covertly padded type, but for the managers, a small square size glass is fitted in one of the three partitions. The phone lines can also identify that a particular cubicle is a manager's space. I was given a manager's space whereby I could phone out to any phone number. This was by sheer chance, because the manager whose place I was given was away for an outstation assignment abroad.

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[31] I did not realise that this daily pass has its time expiry. One day I was out of the building to attend some matters, then I went to get inside again, my pass was denied. Seeing my desperation, the security guard came forward and checked the pass. He told me that the daily pass would not allow any entrance after 5:00pm. As I looked at my watch, it was only 5:05pm. Followed by my explanation, I was given permission to enter.

As there is no company canteen, the majority of employees at PetCo Barat have their lunch at the food courts inside the building. Suggestions by my supervisors to have a light informal discussion with other employees over lunchtime were almost impossible because it was difficult to identify the PetCo staff, as the place was jammed with the public. I usually only managed to sit among the staff with whom I was acquainted at the Human Resource Division. Apart from this public food court, I was told that there is a pantry for light refreshment on every floor of PetCo's offices, but it was barely used on my floor.

Throughout my stay at PetCo Barat, I managed to establish good relationships with both executive and non-executive levels that included the clerks and secretaries. We usually had lunch together. They gave me an insight into management affairs. When I was alone in my cubicle, I took notes of the pertinent conversations and made observations in my diary. The use of a diary and not a journalist-kind notebook might conceal my intention of reporting their daily activities from the curiosity of the prying employees. Likewise, immediately after each interview, I also managed to write some observations that were unable to be recorded, such as interviewees' facial expressions throughout the session and some comments that were made after the recording machine was turned off.

The outfits of the female employees at PetCo Barat were notable. They were seen wearing more business-like outfits such as trousers, long skirts and suits. One employee commented that it seemed to fit in well with the corporate image, which the company held. However, a different picture could be observed on Fridays[32]. Most of them (sometimes including the non-Malays) would wear traditional dresses of two pieces of loose clothing completed with a long top and skirt, which are known as *baju kurung* and *kebaya*. Quite a number of them were not wearing headscarves. This incident of hair uncovering among female employees is less likely to be seen at PetCo Selatan and almost unfound at PetCo Timur.

To release stress, employees might use the fitness health centre, which is located at the concourse level. This fitness centre operates seven days a week

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[32] For the Muslims in Malaysia, Friday is regarded as a holy day.

and is watched over by the fitness instructors, who can coach the users of the sport equipment. The health centre spreads over an area of 50,000 square feet and membership is open to all PetCo employees as well as to the public. It offers an array of equipment and activities such as the sports hall, which can cater for more than 300 aerobic participants. It also has five badminton courts, four squash/racquet courts, a basketball court and a *sepak takraw*[33] court, as well as three big screen television screens.

ii. PetCo Timur

Timur is situated about 400 kilometres from Barat. It is important to note that even though PetCo has scores of sites and plants, there are also other international petrochemical companies here. Visitors who have not been back to Timur since the transformation of this fishing area into a multi-billion *ringgit* regional petrochemical centre may not recognise the changed landscape, which is now filled with huge chemical plants. Alongside both roadways, passer-by can witness bright flames erupting from the field reservoirs. The insiders have said that these flames need to be channelled out to prevent any burning chemical gas from being absorbed into the air.

It is equally important to know that PetCo sites at Timur cover a very large area. As there are many sites available, I had to make sure that I covered most of them, which I did, including one site that is about 25 kilometres farther away. The security system is of the same type as other PetCo branches, tight but friendly. I needed to sign my name in and out at the security post of each site. At some sites, visitor's cars are barred from parking inside the compound. And for that matter I had to meet my respondents on foot. At one particular site that would take me more than 15 minutes to reach if I was to walk, I managed to persuade the security guards to allow me to drive my car in. The tactic as instructed by the interviewee whom I was supposed to meet was to say that I had loads of paperwork to show to her. The security guards agreed to let me drive in but not without checking the boot of my car. A similar inspection happened when I drove out from the compound.

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[33] *Sepak takraw* is a traditional court game played by two groups of 3 players each.

When visitors have stayed long in Malaysia, they can tell the difference between Timur and Barat. The religious atmosphere is usually stronger in Timur than Barat. It is understandable that almost all females wear traditional dresses and headscarves. During the two months I spent at the sites of PetCo Timur, I met only one female employee who was without a headscarf. I suspected she was from elsewhere, and had to come here to do an out-station job. Another way of confirming that she was not stationed at PetCo Timur was the way she dressed herself. On that day, she wore business-like trouser-suits, which is normally the attire of employees at PetCo Barat.

Still related to clothing, I need to say that the site engineers whom I interviewed have to wear the company's uniform at work, together with safety hat and boots. The working uniform is a two-piece unisex design, identified by certain colours that represent each site. These groups of engineers are those who are directly involved in the hardcore technical line. They are the female engineers who climb steep ladders or check the field reservoirs. According to them, wearing traditional dresses with their long skirts is impractical for this kind of work. But all of these technical engineers wear headscarves.

PetCo Timur has its own recreational centre that is known as the PetCo Timur Clubhouse. It is a health and fitness centre building, which also consists of a café and is located just beside the beach. It is a well-equipped clubhouse complete with an 18-hole golf course. Tennis courts and football fields are for outdoor activities, while the indoor settings include the gymnasium, swimming pool, badminton, squash and basketball courts. Quite often I had my lunch and tea breaks at the café, and in fact I did one interview at the clubhouse. While I was there, I observed only male club members who were in and out of that club, quite frequently. Female employees were less enthusiastic to become users of this modern fitness centre but were more frequent in going to its café for lunch or dinner.

PetCo Timur has its own schools for primary and secondary pupils, which are not exclusively for the children of PetCo employees only. The local pupils are accepted for registration in these schools too. It also runs a nursery and

kindergarten for toddlers and pre-school children, which are also open to the public. However due to the high demand, priority is given to the children of employees.

In taking care of the welfare of its employees, PetCo Timur has built two housing quarters that are close to the head office. For many other employees who do not have the chance to stay inside the complex, they need either to buy or rent houses in nearby areas. It is said that the price of houses in Timur and neighbouring areas is more expensive than in any other towns nearby. Equally high prices are found with groceries and food. Another weak point here is that Timur does not offer much social entertainment to its residents. There is no cinema, adequate department store or entertainment arcade for people. But food stalls are easy to find. All interviewees cited that they have to go either to Kaanan town (1-hour's drive) or take the opposite road to Kieri town (1.5-hour's drive) for shopping and entertainment. They said that life at Timur is not exciting. The young and single residents said that their stay was merely tied to work, no more than that.

iii. PetCo Selatan

It is situated about 30 kilometres from Barat. The primary objective of PetCo Selatan is to place itself to become a high performance business-driven organisation geared to meet the research and technology needs of the company as well as other petroleum companies, both in Malaysia and abroad. It works in partnership with its customers to provide value added technological services in the areas of exploration and production, refining, gas and petrochemicals, product development, materials and corrosion, environmental management and digital information.

PetCo Selatan is built on 50-acres of land on the top of a hilly palm tree area, which consists of at least eight buildings identified by the letters A to H. I went to Buildings A, C and D to meet the respondents for interview sessions. However, the questionnaire reached most of the female employees of each building. The rest of the buildings were said to be laboratories and storage premises. It is a restricted area that is guarded by the guards. Permission to see officers had to be acquired prior to the meeting.

There is one big cafeteria that accommodates around fifty customers at one time. This cafeteria is equipped with a TV lounge in one corner. A special section with nicer chairs and tables, which has foldable Japanese-style doorways, was said to be for the dignitaries and notable guests who happen to visit PetCo Selatan. On a few occasions, if no guests are around, I have seen employees use this special section to have their lunch.

I was only able to observe the outfits of female employees during lunchtime at the cafeteria. Apart from the Chinese and Indian employees, almost all of the female Malay employees at PetCo Selatan put on headscarves. The non-Malays usually were comfortable with the casual business-like office attire such as trouser and knee-length skirt suits. But it is interesting to note that on Fridays, these non-Malays also sometimes could be seen wearing Malay traditional clothes.

Problems of Participant Observation

The observation was aided by the extended time I spent with the company. However, I did not get these advantages when I did my interviews with the authorities. Time, cost and the difficulty of gaining access are the main barriers in doing ethnographic study [Hammersley and Atkinson. 1997].

> *"The combined use of sophisticated questions and surveys, detailed interviews and observation may give great insight into an organisation but it is also extremely time consuming and labour intensive"*
> [Brown. 1995; 61]

Clearly the participant observation method applied in this study was not meant to answer the research questions. However, it managed to provide the basic background and significant accounts in understanding the experiences of female employees at PetCo.

Questionnaires

Gaining Access

An official letter asking for access at PetCo was sent in February 2001 followed by a few e-mail attempts. These approaches did not work well. PetCo was silent. Only after several unofficial inquiries and help from friends of friends, in May 2001 access was granted, unconditionally. This is an important point to emphasise because a personal link optimises a researcher's work [Pahl. 1996]. These personal contacts can become very

important not only for gaining access but also status and rapport. At the same time, while waiting for PetCo's response, I received support letters from the Ministry of Women and Family Development and the Ministry of Human Resources of Malaysia.

To utilise the time fully, I conducted both methodologies concurrently. In the field, I experienced different encounters that required different treatments. I have to admit that getting access into PetCo Barat was not that easy. Though I was already been given permission in writing to conduct my fieldwork at PetCo, the initial negotiation stage was still tricky. It was my first time to present myself in front of the company's gatekeeper. Since PetCo Barat was the company's headquarters, I had to make certain that I could get the best possible co-operation from the company. After a couple of meetings with the senior manager of Human Resource Development Unit explaining my research and the kinds of assistance I wished to have, I won her confidence in the end. She assisted me all the way through while I was there.

However, PetCo Timur showed a different story. Here, I had to move from various different sites and thus required the co-operation of various different gatekeepers. An officer at Site 10 was supportive of my research project. Not only did he provide the number of female employees at his site, but he also prepared the names and contact telephone numbers of the potential interviewees working at his site. In addition, he e-mailed them in advance telling them that they had been selected for interviews. As a result most of them were aware and prepared for the fact that I might be calling them. Even though his assistance had provided a smooth fieldwork process, I had to be sure that he was not using his supervisory status over the participants to threaten the ethical value of my study. When asked, the interviewees told me he only briefed them about my research.

At Site 12 however, one particular site manager not only interrogated me in detail asking the purpose of my research project, he also asked for verification of my identity. Upon receiving the confirmation that I was a legitimate researcher who had received permission from PetCo, he finally gave his consent. By contrast, an officer at Site 11 left me the information without any quibble at all, and let me work from that. The worst thing was

when an officer could not be bothered with my academic project, as at Sites 2 and 16, and only left me dealing with her clerk. The gatekeepers at the remaining sites only checked through the documents and official letters, and finally permitted me to go on doing my survey. Either way, even though gaining access was not straightforward or trouble-free, I succeeded in getting what I wanted for the benefits of my research.

The Presentation of the Questionnaires

The questionnaire used a bright noticeable yellow paper that has been folded to look like a booklet. Refer to Appendix 1 for the questionnaire presentation. A structured questionnaire covering various aspects of the demographics, roles and aspirations in family and work was formulated and applied to female workers in this sample. Section A is about the respondent's personal details; Section B is about her opinions on working life; and Section C is about her opinions on work and family commitment. The questions on attitudes were measured using a 5-point Likert scale. All options in the questionnaires were pre-coded for SPSS. The questionnaires have also been pre-numbered prior to distribution so that I could trace from which site a particular answer came from.

Since my research related to the management affairs of PetCo, a confidentiality clause was written on the questionnaires, in which anonymous status was given to the respondents. Due to the fact that it was written in two languages, the questionnaires appeared to be long. English is the main language for the questionnaires and interviews. However, the translation in *Bahasa* is important[34], since it is the language most respondents answered in. The questionnaires contained 52 questions that spread over 36 pages. A small piece of paper was attached to each questionnaire, indicating the day of collection.

The distribution and collection process of the questionnaire was carried out in stages. It took approximately three months to complete. A careful time-schedule was made and strictly followed so all sites were included. The respondents were given one week to complete answering the questionnaire

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[34] Since the Malaysian Government encourages the use of *Bahasa* in any dealings in showing nationalistic sentiment towards the country, I tried to avoid being labelled as insensitive towards the *Bahasa* issue.

before collection. However, collection days have to be extended at each site to include the late return of the questionnaires.

There was no decided number of participants as the questionnaire invited responses from all women who are currently working at PetCo. In distributing the questionnaires, the first thing to do was to ask how many female employees were at the sites. However, there are some specific principles to which I had to adhere. One was to include all female employees on the day the questionnaire was to be distributed. My strategy was to ask the contact persons about the exact number of female employees at their sites. They usually distributed the questionnaires on my behalf. Another means was to deliver the questionnaire personally. The first technique was more promptly and frequently done because not all sites permitted me to walk freely within their office space, whereas the second technique was more time-consuming, but it allowed me to introduce myself and explain the aim of my research.

A total of 430 sets of self-answered questionnaires were handed out to 16 PetCo sites. These sites included the company's subsidiaries as well as its partly owned companies and its associated companies. The response rate was varied ranging from the lowest of 40 per cent to the highest of 94 per cent. See Chart 3 below for the response rate of each site.

Chart 3: The Percentage of the Questionnaire Return-Rate at PetCo's Sites
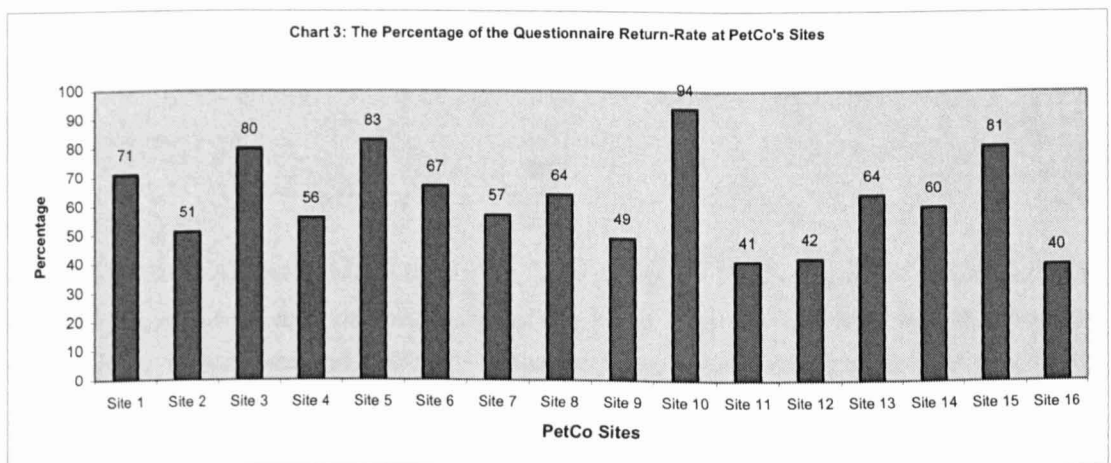
The variance in response rate relied on how the questionnaires were distributed. It seemed that the closer I was with the respondents when the questionnaires were distributed the higher response rate I received, as happened at Site 10. By contrast there was a low response in sites 11, 12

and 16, which were the sites where I could not have personal contact. Apart from this, it is unknown to me whether this inconsistent rate might have been derived from certain group of employees who might feel threatened by this research project. The lack of non-Malays' participation in this study might be seen as a reason why some sites produced lower rates than the others did. Nonetheless, it is quite clear that the number of non-Malay employees in all sites is not as many as the Malays at PetCo. There are only 4 per cent non-Malay respondents, and only three non-Malay interviewees participated in this study. It is difficult to determine this phenomenon, especially when I did not have official data on the number of non-Malays employees at PetCo. I suspected that ethnic representation is regarded as a 'sensitive' subject by the company management.

By the deadline of the distribution and collection process, this study received a 60 per cent response rate. This encouraging outcome was due to several factors. One of them was that the issue of women and work managed to attract female participation to the research. This shows that women were indeed interested to talk about issues related to them[35]. Another reason was that I succeeded in getting the right gatekeeper who takes control of her or his site. My presence in the building also influenced the response-rate because I was persistently searching and collecting the questionnaires even when they were long over-due. In addition, the use of a noticeable bright yellow questionnaire might also have influenced the respondents' keenness to answer it. Holding support letters from the ministries also helped the study.

Analysis

Some attitudinal questions such as *"It is better for the family if the husband is the principal breadwinner and working outside the home whereas the wife has the primary responsibility for the home and children"*; *"A woman who works is taking away a job of a man"*; *"The place of a married woman is really at home if the husband can afford the family expenditure"*, were usually treated as a measure of modernity in attitude. The inclination either to hold a modern outlook or a traditional attitude would be apparent by the interviewees' degree of acceptance of these statements.

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[35] Over an informal conversation some women workers openly expressed their interest in the issue to me. One respondent e-mailed me saying how glad she was to answer the questionnaire because the unsolved issues of a woman's role at home and in a career frequently had occurred to her before.

Although an open-ended type was never a favourite question among the respondents in the questionnaires, when asked, *"Why is working important to you?"* the study accumulated 70 percent respondents who spent time writing reasons why they work. Likewise, when asked in the session, *"Why do you work?"* interviewees gave more or less the same explanation that, working after studying is normal. Once they have completed their education, they should start working to earn a living. It is a social expectation that they have to fulfil in life.

The questionnaires, once coded, were put into SPSS and analysed by using descriptive statistics. The written answers from the questionnaires were correctly quoted and the code number of the respondents was accurately identified. In many instances in the questionnaires, the respondents have elaborated their views about certain matters at length. Any hand-written answers found in the questionnaires were treated in the same manner as the transcription text from the interviews. I searched for the recurring themes frequently mentioned by the respondents. See Appendix 2 for the percentage of each variable.

Although the responses from non-Malays were too small to provide sensible comparative statistical figures on ethnic groups, their remarks are still interesting. Thus I used them in supporting my arguments.

Problems of Questionnaire Survey

Apart from people commenting that the questions in the questionnaire were long, not many obvious problems seemed to occur with the questionnaire. The only obvious obstacle here was to get the company's official data. As the secondary materials such as demographic information, official reports and statistical facts from PetCo's data bank were unavailable due to the rigid confidentiality policy of the company, the questionnaires proved to help me tremendously.

For the interviews with the engineers, I decided to distribute most of the questionnaires first before conducting the interview session. This happened so that the respondents would become aware of this academic project. The

technique proved workable because they managed to identify me as *"the one who distributed that bright yellow form"*, which helped to break the ice almost instantly. From that moment, the following interview session started to take place smoothly.

Interviews

Gaining Access

Due to the need of the research interest, there were two fieldwork stages in this academic project. It was partly important for me not to be overly packed with the research workload at one time and partly it is important to have a fresh mind before looking at other dimensions in this research.

The interviews with the engineers were conducted in 2002 and the interviews with the authorities in the following year, which derived from two different objectives and involved two different groups of people. The first interviewee stage was solely dedicated to the employees of PetCo in gaining data about work at home and the workplace, with a special interest in the engineering field. The second interview was conducted among the people from the ministry and academicians in Malaysia in gaining information on engineering and on government policy towards women and work in this country.

In gaining access to the company, I had to manage the time properly. For the interviews with the engineers, it is important to note that in many cases the questionnaire and interview approaches were done almost simultaneously, one after another, from January to April 2002. For the interviews with the authorities, I sent out two letters to the Ministry of Women Affairs and Family Development and Ministry of Human Resources as well as five letters to the local universities[36] requesting an interview session with them, in early January 2003. An interview with the Minister of the Ministry of Women Affairs and Family Development was denied[37]. However, in the same reply letter, the Ministry substituted its principal officer to comply with my request. The date and venue were fixed in late January. A totally different story with the Ministry of Human Resources took place in which my interview request was never met. Of the five letters sent out, three

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[36] They are the International Islamic University, Malaysian University of Technology, National University of Malaysia, University of Malaya and Putra University of Malaysia.
[37] According to the Ministry's personnel whom I interviewed, students' requests to interview the Minister are normally rejected. However the Ministry usually designates the assignment to other relevant personnel.

universities[38] agreed to provide candidates for an interview. Two of the lecturers were men, whereas another one was a female lecturer teaching in various branches of the engineering field.

I targeted 30 interviews with the engineers, which were achieved in the end. The four interviews with the authorities were conducted to strengthen the data on hand. I had not decided on the number of interviewees with the authorities because I estimated the bureaucratic difficulty I had to face in dealing with these top people. My target was only to rely on the opportunity that I could gain in the field. It is important to note here that this study emphasises the complexity and depth rather than a broad understanding of surface patterns. The sample size was reasonable enough to help understand the processes rather than to represent a population statistically [Crotty.1998: Renzetti and Lee. 1992]. There was no need for a large sample, as I was not establishing causality but developing explanations through a scrutiny of how processes work in particular contexts [Layder. 1998].

In accordance with the research proposal, the interview sampling was aimed at female engineers or women with any technical expertise in high technology industry. Therefore, women with an engineering background or other sciences such as female chemists, geologists or other scientific groups were accepted as a research sample. Their career accounts and the domestic life, particularly the way they cope with the different conditions of handling a tough job and managing a caring task, as well as the time spent before deciding that engineering should be their career were the primary objectives of this study. The interviews with the authorities were also focused on engineering aspects, especially to gain the views of the academics as well as the Government.

The Presentation of the Interviews

The interview guide for the interviews with the engineers has ten themes, which are identified by letters A to J. The first part of the questions contained more personal information such as interviewees' highest level of education and place of origin. Then, I went to discuss the factual questions such as information on their careers and engineering. Asserting the

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[38] They are from the International Islamic University, University of Malaya and the National University of Malaysia.

controversial issues later may invite better participation from the sample [Seale. 1999]. Thus I put the more controversial questions on the marital aspects and domestic affairs of the respondents at the end, which would not seem strange coming after other questions, but might have put people off if they had come at the beginning. Subsequently, I returned to the uncontroversial questions like their academic experiences, before I raised the questions on the influences and support. The closing question of the interview guide was on the key moments in life. I have also designed a similar bilingual format in my interview guide. It works as a safety measure to connect the questions with the local interviewees. Refer to Appendix 3 for the interview questions with the engineers.

The interview with the authorities is very straightforward. The interview guide has two sections, but it is specifically referred to a particular group. Group A is meant for the ministerial personnel whereas Group B is for the academic people. The questions are short and direct. Refer to Appendix 4 for the interview questions for the authorities.

Analysis

In contrast to the questionnaire sampling, the interviews were strictly meant for female engineers and technical experts so that a narrow focus on their professional and domestic perspectives could be exercised. At this stage, the methodology used a basic semi-structured, in-depth individual interview. An audio micro-cassette recorder was used in the session. Whenever each session was about to start, I would ask the interviewee's permission for the recording.

For the interviews with the engineers, I used two main ways of getting the names for potential interviewees. Apart from obtaining names from the officials, in exceptional situations, I also had to rely on a snowballing effect by asking the interviewees the names of their colleagues. I only used this method at the sites that gave lesser co-operation. A snowball sample is often used to obtain a sample where there is no adequate list that could be used as a sampling frame [Arber. 1993a]. It involves a personal recommendation of an interviewee that shares the same characteristics of interest.

Even though the interview at this stage concentrated on the female engineers, other technical experts were also included depending on the situation. Female engineers in PetCo were fewer in number compared to their male colleagues. Of more than 200 engineers in site 10, only six of them are female along with two chemists. The Personnel Executive at that site allowed me to interview them all, which I did. Then again, if the representation of the female engineers in a particular site was big enough, the inclusion of other professionals was ruled out. In one case, I interviewed a female geologist because she was one of the few female senior managers.

The interviews with the engineers took about 30 minutes to one hour depending on the interviewees' schedule. The interviewees generally decided the location of the interview. I usually met them at the meeting room and guestroom or at the PetCo Clubhouse. These settings provided a cosy atmosphere for a recording session.

The same strategy was applied to the interviews with the authorities involving a semi-structured type. I also used an audio micro-cassette recorder, which I would ask the interviewee's permission to use prior to recording. It took between 15 minutes to one hour per session. I gave the liberty to the interviewees in deciding the interview's location. An interview with the Ministry personnel took place in her office at the Ministry building, whereas the interviews with the lecturers were conducted in office rooms or around the vicinity of the universities.

I tried to ensure that the quality was based on the markers of 'validity' and 'reliability' in qualitative research. My basic direction follows the methodological debate made by Strauss and Denzin. Strauss [1987] emphasises on being objective in the qualitative methods. However, this is sometimes unsustainable in the context of social research. Hence Denzin [1988; 432] argues that *"by making qualitative research scientifically respectable, researchers may be imposing schemes of interpretation on the social world that simply do not fit that world as it is constructed and lived by interacting individuals"*. People live in a multiple and endless fragmentation of experience, which has profound consequences for the practice of social and cultural research. Following their

methodological debate, I tried to maintain objectivity in my analysis of qualitative data.

I first started with transcribing the interviews, and later translated. I chose to use a verbatim transcription, though laborious and time-consuming, because I did not want to lose any potential data that may become significant. Because of the semi-structured nature of the interviews, each topic was relatively easy to find. I went through the transcripts manually, topic by topic, making notes on each theme of the interview data.

On the other hand, due to the language complication, I only translated into English particular pieces of transcription that was important for the study. It is a good idea to avoid translating the whole text into English because not only would it be a painstaking task that undeniably would take ages to complete, but might be unnecessary and useless, especially since this study has specific targeted aspects for an empirical investigation. See Appendix 5 for the summaries of the interview data.

The most difficult question to ask the interviewees was on the traditional and cultural aspect. When asked, *"What does your religion say about working women?"* I sensed almost all Malay interviewees tried to say the ideal things rather than things they really wanted in life. In contrast, being less affiliated to Buddhism, Christianity and Hinduism than those who adopt Islam, Indian and Chinese interviewees seemed oblivious of what their religions say.

The general response from the questionnaire enabled me to amend some questions and add one famous Malay proverb in the interview guide. The proverb is a well-known old saying that place women in the kitchen. As the kitchen is seen as an exclusive place for women in general [Myrdal and Klein. 1968], the inclusion of this proverb might test the level of respondents' attitude towards women's role at home. I was also hoping to investigate patriarchal elements, which Malaysians might still have, especially pertaining to their domestic life.

Problems of Interviews

Appointments for interviews had to be reconfirmed depending on the interviewees' work agenda. When the female engineers agreed to an interview, time had to be constantly renegotiated. I soon got used to meetings being cancelled and rescheduled at the last minute. Fortunately, the diaries of these female engineers still allowed for rebooking. In fact, one interview session had to be held on two different days. This problem was very obvious among female engineers and the technical experts working at PetCo Timur. Due to them having a busy working schedule, this was an obvious reason that I had to discard the diary content method. The interviewees could not spend much of their time recording their daily activities.

Questions on a husband's occupation, income and financial commitment to the household were treated as sensitive questions [Renzetti and Lee. 1992]. Not only did I feel uneasy about asking because I believed that this particular question was a bit intrusive, the interviewees were also apprehensive about answering it. The Malaysian culture expects a husband's position to be higher than his wife's, no matter what. The idea of having a higher status addresses the issue of respect. Another sensitive issue, which apparently also related to the culture, was the question of whether an unmarried interviewee had a steady boyfriend or not. Not many Malaysians are ready to talk about this issue openly to a complete stranger.

The presence of other people may affect the process of doing research. I found the existence of others who were observing the interview session quite intimidating. As the interview is on the subject of women, work and the family, the presence of one interviewee's husband made me feel uncomfortable. It was extremely difficult when I discussed the interviewee's domestic experiences. I did not want to be seen as probing into his personal life by talking about his role in the household. At the same time, his wife might not feel at ease speaking about her household condition in front of him. Probably he got bored or realised the awkwardness of his presence at the session, and I was glad to see him go off to the swimming pool for a swim.

I had expected different responses to be given over the interview session. In some instances, they managed to talk about several intended points in the interview guide, in one breath. But some interviewees needed to be guided. At this stage according to Puwar [1997], an experienced researcher will know how to manipulate the situation by guiding these interviewees to the issue without losing contact with them. Ideally, an interview guide should only operate as a point of reference, not to be followed as a strict framework. Facing the same situation, being a novice, I relied very much on the interview guide, which resulted in losing eye contact with my interviewees. This was very obvious for the first few interviews, but I coped better with the rest of the interview set, especially after having to repeat the same question. I have to admit that the interviews were tough for me at the beginning. However, over time I began to feel more confident.

Another factor that could worsen the situation was when the interviewees declared that they had a meeting in 15 minutes that left me with a need to prioritise the remaining interview questions. In such an awkward situation of what to ask and what to leave out and at the same time asking the questions while keeping an eye on the interviewee as well as the time, I had to prioritise the questions. I was usually only able about to ask their experience in the engineering field and their management at home and the workplace, as these were the most valuable points for the study. Sometimes, I was able to obtain more time from the interviewees as they got involved in the topics being discussed and got rather carried away. For instance, several interview sessions went past the lunch-hour time or beyond working-hours.

The different ways in which the interviewees expressed their view also affects a piece of research [Fielding. 1993]. The keen talkers who resented interruptions and proceeded in monologues might want to talk about many irrelevant things to the research [Ostrander. 1995]. If I had not inserted questions until they had actually stopped answering the last one then I would probably have got many of the issues unresolved before the time finished. Indeed I would have to devise ways of contesting interviewees' inclination to "just talk" easily, freely and at length, not about the issue in which I was most interested.

The opposite of the keen rambler was a rather defensive type of interviewee who speaks in short sound bites. When the interviewees adopted this attitude they turned the session into the equivalent of a highly structured survey that barely skimmed the surface of the issue that is substantial to the study. At this point, the researcher needs to be ready for this highly defensive tactic. It can be extremely demoralising if one gets two or three words to several open-ended questions. I became nervous thinking that I was unable to attract their interest in the topic. As I went on asking the questions, I would skim over the questions that I thought would make them more uninterested before returning to the questions that I had left, once an improved co-operative atmosphere was attainable. Other than that, I learned no way around this if my interviewees were not willing to engage in an in-depth conversation.

It is significant to point out my arduous interview experience with one of the authorities. She seemed to be suspicious of my intention to interview her. Clearly, for the first half of our interview she was very uneasy in providing answers. I, on the other hand, was a bit anxious to manage the session efficiently. When asked about opinions and views, she without fail always reminded me of her organisation's policy of not revealing too much opinion but to stick to facts. Perhaps having a background as a public relations officer before, she managed to keep herself in check, as well as taking control over the session. However difficult the interview was, I tried to follow my interview guide as far as possible by directing her back to the interview questions. The only piece of luck that broke the ice of our interview was the moment she discovered that we were originally from the same state. From there on, the session was conducted almost effortlessly. I then re-ran the question guide to ensure I covered the intended questions for the interview. She was even willing to lend an unpublished report (at that time) provided that I would not copy its whole content. At the end of the session, she gave away some official ministerial brochures and a statistical booklet related to women in Malaysia, which were very useful.

I had anticipated that the three lecturers whom I interviewed could not spend much time due to lecturing commitments. Thus, I prepared quite short and

direct questions in the interviews, which enabled them to answer promptly, although some of them were quite engrossed with the session.

In most events, knowing that a recorder was being used, the interviewees felt uneasy. On some other occasions, a few interviewees asked for a telephone interview. But when I explained that I did not have a phone-recording machine neither could I manage shorthand, they were co-operative. However, an over-dependence on the tape recorder caused me to lose track of what had been said by the interviewees. Consequently, I tended to follow the sequence of my interview guide, even though the interviewees might have mentioned the issue at one point. I had to think quickly in correlating the present question in the list to the succeeding questions from the interview guide, so that repetition could be avoided.

When using an audio recording, it was impossible to capture facial expressions such as when the respondents nodded to confirm inquiries, or even when the interviewees showed uninterested expressions. At times, they would ask, *"how much more is there to cover?"* which contributed to a sense of having to hurry through the interview. At other times, the interviewee's body language expressed that they were anxious to get away. But they managed to maintain politeness so as not to offend me. Interestingly, on a few occasions once the session was completed and the recorder was shut off, they delayed leaving and talked more about the issues. In such cases, when the interviewees left, I took some notes of any important issues they had raised in my diary. An interviewee might be better engaged in the interview once the recorder is shut off. It occurs perhaps due to interviewees' uneasiness of being a subject under investigation.

Additionally, the culture of interviewing is not a conventional Malaysian way. Malaysians are normally introverts in expressing their opinion, especially when they know their words are going to be quoted [Lee and Tan. 2000: Lee and Sivananthiran. 1992]. In the workplace, they do not want to offend the company, as it may jeopardise their position as the workers [Ling. 1991]. When asked about culture, they usually do not want to be identified as the opponents of the existing traditions [Lie and Lund. 1994]. This is contrary to Britain where interviews can be seen as common ways of expressing opinions

and disappointments. Its people are usually willing to co-operate in research projects [Dex. 1991]. The same phenomenon was not seen in a Malaysian context. For example, Rayyan, a Government officer, was a little disappointed at not having been given the questions prior to interview session. She said that in normal interview situations, the officers were given the questions so that they could prepare the answers beforehand.

In addition, the use of a mini-cassette recorder was also considered threatening. It is quite correct to say that an interview approach is not as common among Malaysians. In fact in PetCo itself, when certain issues were submitted for the feedback of its employees, the Human Resource Development Unit frequently administered the questionnaire approach[39], which PetCo's personnel officers think of as more manageable and less fussy.

While the sampling selection was straightforward for the questionnaires, a thorough selection had to be devised for the interviews. The interviews with the engineers were done with the assistance of the personnel officers (or a higher authority) at each site. Issues dealing with the authority need to be discussed here because clearly it has a great effect on each piece of social research. From my experience of fieldwork, I might say that a researcher could achieve better co-operation when she or he works with a higher-ranking officer in a company. At PetCo Timur, I managed to meet and discuss my research objective with its Managing Director, and as a result a smooth research project sailed effortlessly along the way. On the contrary, when only the assistance of middle ranking officials was provided to me, the research process became less smooth.

It is now time to talk briefly about the pilot studies that I conducted prior to the fieldwork.

Pilot Work

I conducted five preliminary pilot studies with women with an engineering background prior to the final structure of the questionnaire design and the interview guide with the engineers. This was done in order to develop better

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[39] An officer explained that the designing and processing of the questionnaire is usually done by an independent American research agency, which has a long collaborative research project with PetCo.

ideas of what to expect from my respondents, especially from the female engineers and technical experts. The participants in my pilot study said that engineers are people who do not like to read lots of words as they are trained for numeric tasks. It was therefore imperative for me to edit the long questions. Less significant questions were eliminated, the question length was reduced, the format structure was rearranged and any unclear questions were minimised, so that it might attract the respondents. Their suggestion to trim down the questions on respondents' private life, particularly whether they have a steady boy friend or not, was very much appreciated. It is very true that the nature of these questions would be regarded as a sensitive question to some unmarried women in Malaysia.

It took me more than two hours in each pilot study before reaching the existing format. But on the test run on friends, I knew that the questionnaire could be completed in less than 15 minutes, especially when some of the questions could be skipped. In the real sessions, it took me between 15 minutes to one hour to complete both interview stages.

There was no pilot work done for the interviews with the authorities since it only involved a much smaller group as well as a very limited set of questions.

Ethical Issues

Ethics are the moral code that guides the interaction of the researcher and the researched group [Homan. 1991]. In this essence, I had to adhere to the matters of right and wrong with regard to my relation to the participants in my study. These issues were less problematic in the interviews and questionnaires because I usually acquired an informed consent from the participant. Whenever they declined, I would not pursue them further. In one particular case, I lost one candidate who actually fits the criteria[40].

Many debates in the methodology literatures argued about research ethics, especially when it involves the participant observation method. Ethical decisions would depend upon the value placed by the researcher on the research and the researched [Bulmer. 1982]. Negotiations will take place

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[40] She has been working for many years with PetCo, holds a high managerial position and manages engineering jobs as well but politely declined for an interview with no obvious reason.

between the researcher, sponsors, research participants and those who control access to the information that the researcher seeks [Strauss. 1987]. The amount of control the researcher can exercise over the research process will influence the exercise of the ethical decisions [May. 1997]. In this study, I observed and only reported occurrences that are strictly relevant and have sociological value to my study. Aspects such as office gossip among the participants and arguments at the workplace, however interesting they may be, were not used.

There are several possible methodological issues in acquiring meaningful personal information from the respondents. In all of these cases, particular care has to be taken to protect the identity of the respondents, and the confidentiality of the information they provide [Arber. 1993b: May. 1997]. Whenever an agreement to be interviewed was given, I would take all possible steps to protect the data and identity of my interviewees in case it was used for a purpose other than that intended. Throughout the discussion, I distinguished the respondents by a reference number appearing in the questionnaire. In addition, I created pseudonyms for the interviewees. The information, especially anything that would give negative implications about PetCo, would be treated with care.

The phenomenon of a researcher's presence, overtly and covertly, in fieldwork was an ethical methodological dilemma [Hammersley. 1995: 1992]. In the final section in this chapter, I need to elaborate the ambiguity of my existence as a researcher on the site.

Issues of Being Outsiders – Insiders
The ethics of doing research is to make a researcher's identity obvious and the subject under investigation transparent to the respondents [Bulmer. 1982]. I did not have the intention of conducting my research in a covert fashion. Being identified as one of 'them' seems to create a better atmosphere between the respondents and the researcher. I sensed that my respondents were relaxed seeing me wandering around their office. Sometimes they came to my desk, and we chatted on many topics, which were unrelated to research subjects.

According to Seale [1999], to speed up the participation degree, talking about personal matters quite early on usually has the effect of opening up on the part of the interviewee. Sometimes this happened quite naturally, but at other times it was intentionally done. My shared background helped in the interview with most of my interviewees, and at the end, we were often talking like friends and enjoying the sessions a lot. To my benefit, my education and class background was very similar to my engineer interviewees. We all had received tertiary academic qualification, and some of them had graduated from universities in the UK, as I had done. In addition, most of them come from a middle class family, as I do. But most importantly, since the interest of this research is on women, sharing the same gender made my life as the researcher easier.

In a rather classical text within feminist interviewing, Oakley [1982; 57] stated, *"a feminist interviewing women is by definition both 'inside' the culture and participating in that which she is observing"*. Being a woman means that I could personally identify with the women I interviewed, and the women identified with me so that *"personal involvement is the condition under which people come to know each other and to admit others into their lives"* [Oakley. 1982; 58]. The interview rapport and minimal social distance is more likely to develop when both the interviewees and the researcher share the same gender, ethnicity or some other aspect of their identity, as this allows for identification and empathy between them [Bulmer and Solomon. 1999]. The issue related to women, work and the family raised by this research certainly required comprehensive collaboration from my female respondents. They have to trust me in giving the most extensive information about their life and experience.

Finch [1984; 76] also asserts identification when she says *"however effective a male interviewer might be at getting women interviewees to talk, there is still necessarily an additional dimension when the interviewer is also a woman, because both parties share a subordinate structural position by virtue of their gender"*. Being a woman myself became a major advantage in doing this research. I was often included in their common experience. When they talked about what they disliked about men or the male culture and the sarcasm they received from their male equals, there was always a sort of whispering conversation. It seemed that it was easier to confide in me.

However, as the interview sessions proceeded, rapport did not always easily develop from a shared gender. A few interviewees felt suspicious about the interview and did not wish to be quoted. When it happened, I tried to create rapport through the establishment of links between my life and the lives of the interviewees. If they mentioned that they were originally from Timur, I always managed to manipulate this information by drawing attention to the fundamental discussion. This technique often warms up an aloof atmosphere. Apparently, the importance of the locality and neighbourhood that I have occupied in my life trajectory can be a platform for rapport. This particular instance showed that gender or sexuality is not the only source of identification. My background profile was also useful in creating a feeling of shared identity.

Another aspect that is a particular concern in conducting an interview is the researcher's appearance before her or his interviewees. To ensure a rapport with my interviewees, I made sure that I dressed smartly and hoped I looked just like my interviewees.

> *"....one must dress acceptably, speak acceptably....should adopt a role or identify that meshes with the values and behaviours of the group being studied, without seriously compromising the researcher's own values and behaviours".*
> [Cassell. 1988; 96-97]

Seeking some basic information about the work ethics of the company under investigation may bring in a good result for the research. Major organisations in Malaysia emphasise a dress code of the employees. Some companies might regulate uniforms. PetCo also adopts the dress code as identification with the company, but depending on the situation, the employees were allowed to dress suitably. Although the site engineers were asked to wear uniforms at work, they wore modest attire while they were being interviewed. I can always anticipate that *baju kurung* will be worn in the session, which I also normally wear.

One of the obvious disadvantages of being an outsider is that I was unable to get the appropriate official documents from the company. Asking for basic information such as the demographic records, occupational data and company's official policies was politely refused by the officer-in-charge. He explained that particular data could mislead the representation of the company and thus he was afraid it could accordingly distort my research

findings. I assumed some of the most valuable indicators for my research, particularly the number of female employees and ethnic group participation in the company appeared to be sensitive due their obvious scarcity in number compared to men, as well as to the Malays. In exchange, I was given official documents and clippings of the company for reference, which were less useful for my study.

Following the discussion of insiders and outsiders, apparently language is another relevant issue that needs further elaboration.

Language

An obvious consequence of doing research in Malaysia is the necessity for the researcher to be prepared for a multi lingual content. One needs to be equipped in whichever language interviewees prefer to use. Being an insider in that environment, for the safest route I always started in *Bahasa*, and as the conversation continued, I might switch to English, depending to my intuition and individual needs. In most cases, I used English as a medium of conversation, as I was thinking at that time of the severe translation impediment during the transcription process. However, I have to be flexible while interviewing due to the difficulty of verbal expressions. If the interviewee relied on *Bahasa* even though English was asked, then instantly I changed to converse in *Bahasa*. Throughout the interviews, most interviewees used English with a combination of *Bahasa*. Thus not a single complete English interview session was established, even when it was conducted with the non-Malay interviewees.

There are two difficulties that arise when the research uses a mixed language. Firstly, in transcribing the text. There is no way other than to transcribe the text as accurately as possible. Secondly, in translating the text. It is commonly understood that a bad translation might affect the authenticity of the text [Richards and Richards. 1994]. Having been involved directly in the study, I was able to get an accurate translation for each word and sentence. However, whenever I hesitated in the middle of translation, a professional translator would translate that particular text in its context. An excerpt of the interview text was e-mailed to a qualified translator friend who has a certificate of translation from the Institute of Translation, Malaysia. She then e-mailed the modified text translation back to me.

I faced a unique experience when the interviewees conversed in Timur dialect. Malaysia has a variety of local dialects spoken by the people of each state. Even in one state, some folks of different districts use certain slang. Fortunately I am originally from Timur, thus it is no problem for me to understand. But problems occur when I translate a particular word into a standard *Bahasa.* Some terms of the dialect and slang can be barely translated, unless a long explanation is used. The word *"mussang"* was definitely Timur slang, which applies to a sort of individual personality who easily gets annoyed, offended and behaves irrelevantly. These attributes come together to build up a *"mussang"* personality.

Conclusion

It is necessary to prepare a careful research proposal and a comprehensive research plan prior to the data collection. The research methods have to be sensibly chosen, and research questions must be wisely designed. This process ought to be followed by pilot studies so that some unseen flaws can be eliminated. Along the way, a researcher might have to make some amendments. Additionally, any theoretical grounding of the research process should be directed at demonstrating how the research could be modified in the light of practical concerns.

Triangulation may be used not just to corroborate findings but also to provide the optimum method for a particular type of information [Seale. 1999]. Employing several methods at once in a particular research project might reduce biases of any one method and be supported by those of others [Hammersley and Atkinson. 1983: Webb. et al. 1966]. In this study, I used the concept of triangulation quite loosely to identify the research project. The questions such as a woman's feeling towards home and the workplace, as well as the views of the Government and academicians, were best answered through interviews. Other questions that involved attitudinal statements on the workplace and home were best answered by the questionnaires. In addition, research inquiries on the workplace settings were best answered by the participant observation method [Becker. 1998].

Given the available time and resources, this mixed approach of questionnaires, interviews and participant observation permitted me to relate some quantitative facts to the qualitative material. In the case of women in the workplace and at home, the questionnaire gave me an indication of women's attitude on certain general statements, which would be impracticable in the interview. Additionally, some of the more frank interviews informed me of their standpoints and aspirations towards work and family. The participant observation method gave me the opportunity to experience the daily working atmosphere at PetCo, particularly the company's treatment of its female employees and the running of PetCo's administrative structure. I found it was a great way to be accepted as part of the proceedings, particularly when I was with a senior manager, yet at the same time, I retained the luxury of being an observer.

Whenever possible, I suggest applying the triangulation method to research on certain areas of life, which has not yet or not thoroughly been researched, because it can ensure the validity and reliability of the research materials used in the research [Kvale. 1989]. The methodological triangulation approach can provide richer material and better insight into the issues because it helps to determine which method is best used for each question.

> *"The more sources and types of data we can gather and compare, the surer we can be of the validity of our overall findings and interpretations"*
> [O'Connell-Davidson and Layder. 1994; 53].

In this case, researching the lives and careers of female engineers in Malaysia has not yet been seriously explored, thus the application of the questionnaires, interviews and participant observation methods managed to strengthen points together and tightened arguments better.

Nevertheless, my study should never be considered as comprehensive in itself. Various epistemological ways and many other empirical investigations should be undertaken in understanding issues of women, work and home, which I have not discussed in length. In response to a suggestion from Epstein [1981] who said that generalisations should never derive from the conclusions of research on men to the generic 'people', feminist researchers took up the challenge, and revealed the need for research to be done on women and women's lives [Millen. 1997].

The variety of feminist positions and criticisms in androcentric sociological traditions can provide a means of analysing not just the content of the knowledge but also the means, which that research was conceived, produced, placed and justified as knowledge [Millen. 1997]. Roberts argued that most methods textbooks described as, *"research methodologies based on a masculine view of social reality, which is fundamentally at odds with the viewpoints of women as social actors"* [1981; 2]. This trend is also true in Malaysia, but recently Jamilah [1993] advocated the appropriate information to benefit women at large in explaining women's contributions to employment.

Specifically when investigating issues on women in engineering, it is crucial that the research on women's experiences in any science field should disengage from the androcentric view of normative male job stereotyping, and to transform science so women will not experience discrimination and discouragement [Myer and Baubercheck. 2001].

However, I also believed in the strength of establishing a comparative study on men, particularly the male engineers. The views of male engineers towards their female counterparts would provide better findings. Similarly, the standpoint of management on female engineers about making an unprofitable investment when female engineers got married, the insufficient mobility due to pregnancy, the likelihood of leaving the company when they have children, and the lack of job concentration when they have a family should be relevantly significant. However, it was a deliberate choice to choose only women. Due to time limitation and largely due to the research's requirement, I only managed to present the women's side of the story. The next project might focus on the male's view.

Undoubtedly, an aspect that helps in getting an excellent research piece is to have an experienced interviewer. Obviously, familiarity with the interview situation would facilitate a researcher in creating instant mechanisms to manipulate the interview session whenever necessary. But, I do believe that doing research is a learning process. The more familiarity a researcher has with the researching process the more capable she or he is of handling future academic projects. It can be a vehicle for learning about society and about doing research as well as the topic of investigation. The aim is to achieve

quality research. I agree with Denzin [1988] that the issues of 'validity' and 'reliability' are inadequate to encapsulate the range of social phenomena. Nonetheless, it is also better to accept that quality is a somewhat elusive phenomenon that cannot be pre-specified by methodological rules. In this way, researchers do not need to resolve methodological disputes before even starting their work. According to Seale [1999], they can let this methodological awareness develop and feed into practice.

Any empirical investigation on Malaysia would be more appealing if ethnic and racial discussions are included. Since Malaysia is a multicultural nation, it is important to unearth significant findings about employment among non-Malays. However, this could not be achieved in this study due to the lack of minority ethnic respondents.

This chapter has provided a sketch of the research methods that I used in my study. In the next chapter I shall assess the details of the work accounts of the female employees at PetCo.

Introduction

This chapter analyses the experience of the research participants in the public place. It introduces the readers to basic profiles of female employees at PetCo. The job description, income, level of education and marital status are vital variables that will be used in describing the participants as well as in justifying the research argument.

In general, this chapter investigates the experience of women workers at PetCo alongside the barriers they face at the workplace. How women in this study viewed the importance of work, to what extent they are willing to do overtime, in what situation they consider themselves to be workaholics. It is equally important to know in which situation they are willing to give up working. It also investigates issues of commitment and discrimination in training, opportunities and promotions in the workplace.

The Summary of the Job Description in PetCo

It is important to clearly summarise the job description used in this study. This study applied a common job categorisation replicated from the literature on women and work in Malaysia [Jamilah. 1992b: Hing et. al. 1984]. They are:

i.   The 'administrative group' is the managers and administrators of the company. Nearly 10 per cent of the total respondents categorised themselves in this group.

ii.   The 'clerical group' is the support to the administrators and other higher-ranking job groups. Preparing and typing the paperwork for the executives is their main responsibility. Twenty-seven per cent of the respondents occupied this group.

iii.   The 'general support' group is the employees who do the menial jobs such as cleaning and making drinks for the company. This group includes the cleaners and the tea ladies. Almost 7 per cent of the respondents were from the general support group.

iv.   The 'personnel and human resource management group' is the officers who recruit the new employees, train the staff, as well as deal with

other related staffing affairs. Fifteen per cent of the total respondents were from this group.

v.   The 'research planning and development group' arranges the projects for the company and administers the running of the designs until the projects are completed. Only 3 per cent of the respondents said that they were from this category.

vi.   The 'technical group' handles the technical aspects of the company. Often they manage the sites and supervise the company's computing system. They are a group of technicians, engineers and computer programmers. Nearly 26 per cent occupied the technical group.

Instead of ticking the available selection box from the questionnaires, 14 per cent of the employees had chosen 'others' by specifying working in the area of health, education, finance, logistic operation, procurement, project, safety, training or even work as trainees. Of this group 27 per cent of them identified themselves as working in the financial section. See Chart 4 for the percentage of the job categories involved in this study.

Chart 4: The Percentage (and Total Sampling Number) of the Respondents by Job Category
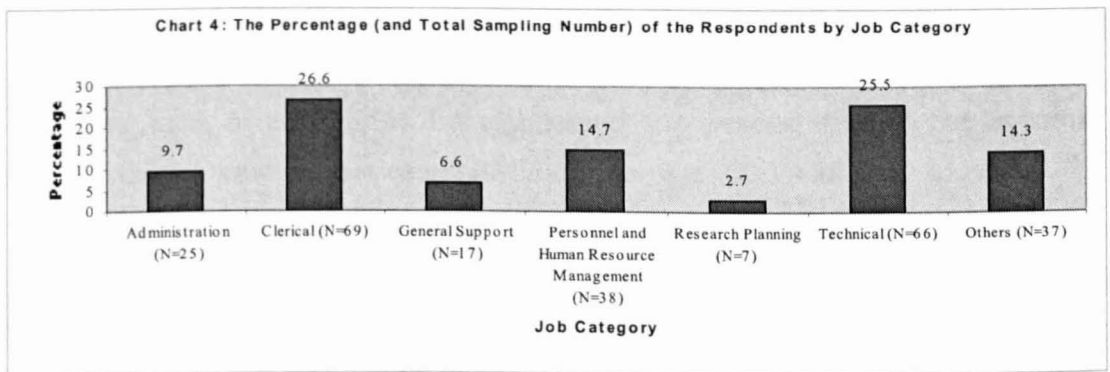
On many occasions in this study, I classified the administration, research planning, technical, personnel and human resources as the higher job grade, and the clerical and general support groups as the lower job grade. The central feature that determined them was the educational level they had received. The higher job grade normally required at least a bachelor's degree and above.

Below is some basic statistical information on the job descriptions, income range, educational level and marital status of the research participants at PetCo. It is important to briefly point out such variables because this data

will be repeatedly used in describing many substantial research concerns such as money matters, prejudice and discrimination issues, as well as the state of family arrangement.

Income Range Configuration

In discussing the income received by the female employees, I need to clarify the money exchange value between Malaysia and Britain for the benefit of the reader. Due to the fluctuation of Ringgit Malaysia (RM) against British Pounds (GBP), I referred to the ratio of RM6: £1 based on the calculation on September 2002 when this report was first written. However small the value of RM (as against GBP) received by Malaysian workers, they should not be looked as economically poor because the cost of living between the two countries is different. The average cost of living, the taxes and other obligatory payments in Malaysia are evidently very much lower than in Britain[41]. Additionally, the report on the national wage by the Ministry of Human Resource Development stated that RM2000 (£333.3) per month is considered as 'good' pay in Malaysia [Malaysia. 2001e]. The Congress of Union of Employees in the Public and Civil Services (CUEPECS) has also supported this national wage rate.

Forty per cent of employees have selected the second box of the income range, which was in between RM2001 to RM4000 (£333.5 to £666.7), followed by 37 per cent who chose RM500 to RM2000 (£83.3 to £333.3) as their monthly income. By contrast, there were 20 per cent of the respondents who received a higher income range of RM4001 to RM100001 and more (£666.8 to £1666.8 and more). From this profile, it is found that most female employees at PetCo are in the middle-income group. See Table 11.

Table 11: The Profile of Income Range of the Respondents (RM and GBP)

Percentage	Income (RM and GBP)
37.5	RM500-RM2000 (£83.3-£333.3)
40.5	RM2001-RM4000 (£333.5-£666.7)
22.0	RM4001-RM10001 (£666.8-£1666.8)

Individuals who have an advanced educational attainment normally receive good pay in Malaysia [Fatimah.1993]. Clearly, the finding from this study agrees with that particular statement. Of those who received an income

[41] For example, Malaysians do not have to pay for a TV licence or value added tax (V.A.T) compared to the British.

salary of RM2001 to RM4000 (£333.5 to £666.7), 69 percent of them held a bachelor's degree, only 11 per cent had a diploma and 10 per cent held a certificate. See Chart 5 for a comparison between educational attainment and the income of the respondents.

Chart 5: The Profile of Respondents by Academic Qualification and Monthly Income of RM2001-RM4000 (£333.5-£666.7)
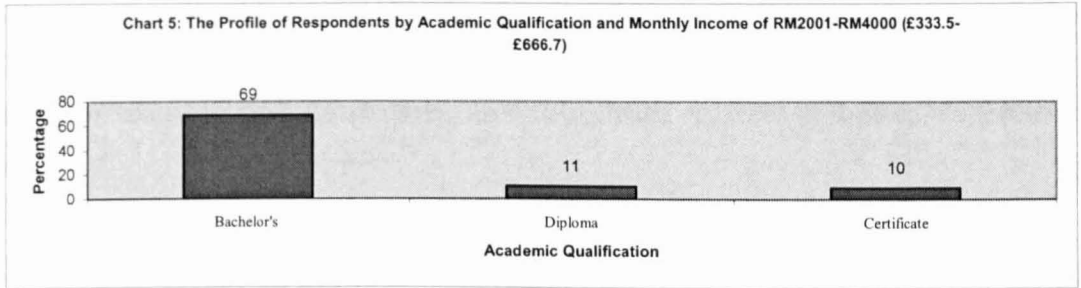
The statistical data on the income was enriched with the information gathered from the interviews. The income of the interviewees ranged from RM2250 (£375) to RM6500 (£1083.3). See Table 12.

Table 12: The Income Brackets of the Interviewees

Frequency	Income Bracket (RM-GBP)
13	RM2000-RM3000 (£333.3-£500)
11	RM3001-RM4000 (£500-£666.7)
1	RM4001-RM5000 (£666.8-£833.3)
3	RM5001-RM6000 (£833.5-£1000)
2	RM6001-RM7000 (£1000.2-£1166.7)

The seniority and performance level determined the income received by the interviewees. For example, interviewees who had worked for less than 3 years received the lowest monthly income bracket of RM2000 to RM3000 (£333.3 to £500) whereas those who had worked between 7 to 14 years with PetCo received the highest monthly income bracket of RM6000 to RM7000 (£1000 to £1166.7).

PetCo is said to apply an equal income bracket among its employees, regardless of gender. The company gave RM2250 (£375) per month to newly appointed executives as well as those with less than 3 years experience. Damia, who has a bachelor's degree said,

"I've just started (working) so I get the basic salary of RM2250"

In searching for any element of wages discrimination based on gender, I asked the Human Resource Executive about the net wage of male employees at PetCo. She said that any newly appointed executives regardless of gender

who had just graduated from university and had no working experience would receive the same starting wage. I also asked the Manager of Human Resources about the same wage issue, and she confirmed this situation. The only case that made the wages different was when the employees were sent for outstation jobs, in which case they were given extra payment. The allowance included a place to stay, food and transportation, which were paid daily. On the other hand as the discussion later revealed, more males were sent for training and outstation, and thus were entitled to better wages than females.

Individuals who have at least a bachelor's degree will have a good career start. However, the age at which they get their first degree should not be ignored. It is generally assumed that an increase of age would increase the wages [Jamilah et. al. 1996]. This relationship of age and wages appears to be consistent in this study. The younger age group received less than the older age group. See Table 13.

Table 13: The Profile of the Respondents by Age and Income

Percentage	Ages	Income (RM and GBP)
72.0	21-30	RM2001-RM4000 (£333.5-£666.7)
88.0	31-50	RM4001-RM6000 (£666.8-£1000)

Similarly, it also means that income increases if seniority is taken into consideration. Nearly 91 per cent of those who have already worked for more than 6 years received an income of between RM4001 to RM6000 (£666.8 to £1000). In addition, a cross tabulation of income and the job grade found that 32 per cent of a lower job grade received between RM500 to RM2000 (£83.3 to £333.3) per month, whereas 15 per cent of the employees in a higher job grade received less than RM2000 (£333.3). See Chart 6 for a comparison of the job grade and income of less than RM2000 (£333.3).

Chart 6: The Profile of the Job Grade Level and Income Less than RM2000 (£333.3)
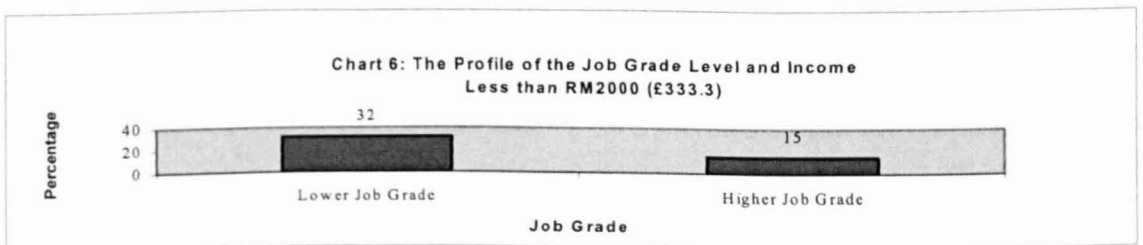
Apparently, my categorisation of the job grade among the employees at PetCo confirmed that clerical and general support groups were the lower job grade while the rest were in a higher job grade.

Previous studies state that the probability of women's participation in the labour force increases with the availability of certain types of work with the pay offered and the provision of working conditions [Atkinson and Delamont. 1990: Barrett. 2001: Crompton. 2001: Dutton. 1983]. As technology is the prioritised sector in PetCo, more employees, especially those with engineering qualifications and other professional skills, were in the technical line. A majority of them received an income range between RM2001 to RM4000 (£333.5 to £666.7). See Table 14.

Table 14: The Profile of the Respondents' Income in the Technical Line

Percentage	Income (RM and GBP)
18.2	RM500-RM2000 (£83.3-£333.3)
48.5	RM2001-RM4000 (£333.5-£666.7)
18.2	RM4001-RM6000 (£666.8-£1000.0)
10.6	RM6001-RM8000 (£1000.1-£1333.3)
3.0	RM 8001-RM10000 (£1333.5- £1666.6)
1.5	RM10001 and more (£1666.8 and more)

Level of Education[42]

Twenty-seven of the interviewees have a bachelor's degree, whereas three of them have a master's degree. Based on the questionnaire data, a majority of the respondents have at least a certificate or another academic qualification (96 per cent). Refer to Chart 7.

Chart 7: The Profile of the Respondents by Academic Qualification

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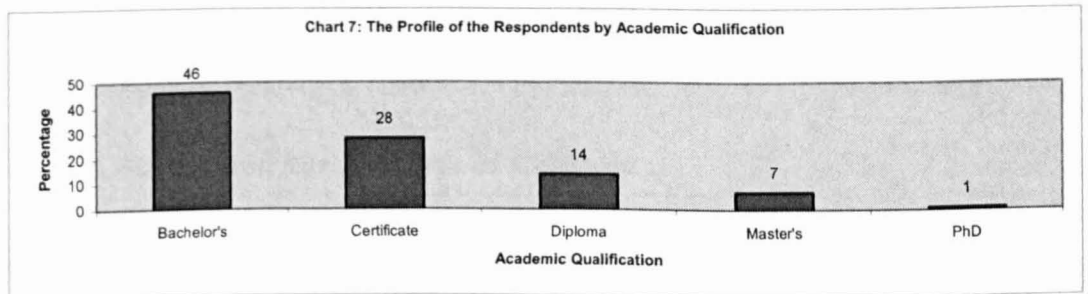
[42] The academic categorisation applied in this study starts with no qualification then follows with a certificate, which is obtainable by attending training courses. A diploma can only be awarded if a student attended a 3-year training course in recognised polytechnics and colleges. A bachelor's is the first university degree whereas a master's is the second degree and Ph.D. is the highest degree awarded to the successful students at established universities approved by the Malaysian Government.

The statement *"working enables them to make use of their intellectual abilities"* was asked. A majority of the respondents agreed to that statement (96 per cent). Fifty-two per cent of the respondents who have a bachelor's degree and above and 44 per cent of them who have a diploma and below agreed to the statement that they could apply their academic qualifications at work. On many occasions, participants in this study have illustrated that the lengthy learning stage throughout their lives helped them to decide to work so that they were able to expand their theoretical knowledge into practice. This was very obvious among PetCo employees.

> *"I think it (working) is a next continuous stage after schooling. We went to the university for quite some time of course we needed to be working. For me, after we have learnt for so many years like 20 years, then I need to apply what I have learnt. What we have learnt is to be used not just to be kept or just for the experience that I have been at the university only".*
> [Razan]

In the West, education is seen as a progressive mechanism for broadening women's minds, and thus expanding their autonomy [Baruch et. al. 1987: Jeffery and Jeffery. 1998: Kauppinen and Gordon. 1997]. There were numbers of women who chose work and career over marriage and children [Corcoran-Nantes and Roberts. 1995]. They understood that time invested in a career, when successful, often gave a generous dividend in money, prestige and independence [Burden and Googins. 1987: Firth-Cozens and West. 1991: McDowell. 1997]. However, the situation in Malaysia is more complex, which I will discuss in Chapter Eight. In brief, if family commitments interfered, most participants in my study have to rethink pursuing the next educational level. The view of Che-Dania illustrated the situation.

> *"I wish I can pursue my education to the master's level. PetCo offered me to do it, but at that time my children were still small and my husband could not get leave from the army base. So I have to reject it".*

Marital Status and the Number of Children

Twenty interviewees were married and the remaining ten were single. The data from the questionnaires showed that 66.8 per cent of the respondents were married, 31.3 per cent were single and 2 per cent were separated, divorced or widowed. See Table 15.

Table 15: The Percentage and Number of the Participants of the Questionnaires and Interviews by Marital Status

Research Type	Percentages		
	Married	Single	Separated, Divorced or Widowed
Questionnaires	66.8 (N=173)	31.3 (N=81)	2 (N=5)
Interviews	66.7 (N=20)	33.3 (N=10)	-

Indicator: Total Number of the Questionnaires are N=259 (100 per cent)
Total Number of the Interviews are N=30 (100 per cent)

Of the married interviewees, thirteen of them have children, three were first time pregnant and four neither had children nor were pregnant at the time this study was conducted, whilst of the married respondents, 84.4 per cent of them have children, whereas 15.6 per cent have no children.

Of the single respondents, 16 per cent of them have a bachelor's degree and 10 per cent have a diploma and certificate. Probably due to receiving better career prospect and good pay, about 13 per cent of the singles have already served more than 6 years and above with PetCo. The trend to delay marriage among women in Malaysia has been consistent over the years [Malaysia. 2001f]. Careers have been blamed for the lessening in interest of women in getting married [The New Straits Times. 4th December 2001]. Literature has cited that women hesitated to have an early marriage, and even avoid marriage altogether partly due to domestic obligations, particularly in relation to children [Arber and Gilbert. 1992: Jeffery and Jeffery. 1998: Kauppinen and Gordon. 1997: Walby. 1997].

Working Atmosphere at PetCo

Working life at PetCo sites at Barat, Timur and Selatan was quite different. PetCo Barat was situated in a vibrant city, overcrowded with people coupled with the problem of traffic congestion, which influenced the lives of PetCo employees. They appeared to be constantly busy, most likely to dress up in professional suits and generally less friendly than the employees at other sites. The largest number of non-Malay employees could be seen here. Since their homes were farther away from the workplace, they usually rushed to and from the office due to traffic jams.

However, employees at PetCo Timur did not face the same problem. In 5-minutes time they were able to reach the workplace because they lived nearby, and a traffic jam was almost unnoticeable. Although they also appeared to be busy, they were more approachable. Most of the time they

preferred to wear traditional outfits of long shirts and skirts. Although PetCo Timur offered less entertainment and fewer facilities than the two sites, many interviewees illustrated how comfortable they were to work at PetCo Timur. They even associated this easy environment at work with motivation in work. When I asked how satisfied they were at work, Alya replied,

> *"Maybe due to the environment, at 5:00pm I can be at home already, no traffic jam. If (I want) to compare here and life in Barat, it is **less stressful, less tension**. But I don't know what will happen if I were to be transferred to Barat. At 6:00pm they have to go out from the office but arrive home at evening, but for us here we can go home at 5:00pm, and it is late if already 5:30pm". [* **My highlight**]*

It seemed that to some interviewees, the environment at the workplace influenced their personal decision, particularly pertaining to domestic arrangements. Even without proper entertainment and socialisation in Timur, interviewees felt contented, provided that they could spend more time with their family. They even viewed their female colleagues in PetCo Barat as workaholics and less likely to have time at home.

The profile of PetCo Selatan was more or less in-between the two sites. Selatan was very close to Barat and well developed with infrastructures, but it still maintained the criteria of a safe small town. The employees of PetCo Selatan were also easy to talk to. Since it has a slightly bigger number of non-Malay employees than PetCo Timur, the clothes were seen here as a mixture of both modern and traditional.

Fourteen interviewees openly said that working environment at PetCo was enjoyable. Although they might not have time for socialisation due to a hectic working life, they were happy because of its friendly atmosphere. Five interviewees affirmed that they were proud working at PetCo and two interviewees said that working at PetCo was their greatest achievement in life.

Social Terms Shared by PetCo Employees

This study understands particular terms constantly used by the interviewees such as "cancer break", "weekend wife-weekend husband", "commute couple" that were regularly applied by PetCo employees. "Cancer break" is a 15-minute mid-morning break[43] used among male employees to smoke

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[43] This is also called as a coffee break at between 10.00am to 10.15am.

cigarettes and have light refreshments. Smoking is strongly a male culture, which is not shared by most female employees. It is equally very important to mention that the Malaysian culture does not highly regard a woman who smokes in public. Although the question was never asked, I believed that no female PetCo employee did so in public. In fact in my observation, I had seen none. If male employees tended to stop working during the morning break to smoke and take light refreshments, it was not the same case with the women employees who tended to go on working. Only a few of them went to the cafeteria.

Some of the interviewees saw this smoking break as of benefit to the male employees. It worked as a mentoring system that enabled men to gain and improve their professionalism in work and to establish strong networking.

> *"The advantage (of men) is that they can get along together in most areas which **we are limited**. Even though they might only smoke or chitchat over the session, but sometimes those things bring some impacts in work. We can't really see that but they can actually establish their own **networking** among themselves. So I think they have that advantage that we ladies don't have". [* My highlight]*
> [Qamra]

Apart from this cancer break, whenever possible in the evening after work, the male employees spent a lot of time together playing golf or other activities[44], regardless of whether they were married or not. But it was definitely *"just don't have time for that"* among female interviewees, especially when they were married with children.

"Weekend wife-weekend husband" is an intricate situation, which the non-local female engineers at PetCo Timur have to face over the weekend. Being married to a partner who worked elsewhere, they have to travel every alternate weekend to each other's place. It might be a "weekend wife" when the wife went to the husband's place, and alternately it might be a "weekend husband" when it was the husband's turn to come to his wife's place. As if this arrangement was not complicated enough for the interviewees, the weekend difference has magnified the problems further[45], which left them only Saturday to have quality time together.

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[44] It was very obvious at PetCo Timur.
[45] The weekend in some states in Malaysia is different. Timur is a Malay Muslim majority state that practices Fridays and Saturdays weekend while Barat and Selatan practice Saturday and Sunday weekend.

"Commute couple" is another exclusive situation at PetCo Timur, which is experienced by the non-local married couples. A majority of them were originally from other states around Malaysia, but they worked in Timur. In general most Malaysians have a strong family connection, especially with their parents. They usually went back to their hometown on a monthly basis. *Balik kampung* (or return to the hometown) is a cultural practice observed by the Malaysians, which strengthens the blood ties among the members of the family. However, going back to their hometown was less evident among interviewees who were married to local men or among those non-local couples who had been married long time.

Work Conditions: Benefits and Barriers

PetCo seemed to be sensitive towards the needs of its staff, especially among its female engineers. Consideration at work, to benefit both the company and the workers, was very apparent. For example, when a female engineer was required at the offshore platform, the management tried to fix a one-day visit. When she was found to be pregnant, if she requested, she could be exempted from taking high-risk tasks such as inspecting the reservoir or participating in a remote area exploration. In such case her job would be carried over by her colleagues, usually the men[46], until she was able to resume her work. In the meantime, she would be restricted to office work until her post-delivery period.

Since the main operational activities were in PetCo Timur, getting a transfer to the intended PetCo branches around Malaysia proved to be difficult among female engineers[47]. It would depend on the rotation system and the availability of the position, yet the priority was given to the seniors, most of whom were men. Another reason that obstructed a transfer was due to the fact that a staff replacement had to be of the same experience level and job specifications.

> *"But to get transferred is not that easy. (It is) depending on the vacancies (and also) you have to get a replacement which is **equivalent** to your job, your experience, your scope of work (thus) it sounds **almost impossible**". [* My highlight]*
> [Syaza]

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[46] Although men's disgruntled voices over this circumstance sometimes could be heard, they usually did the work left by their female co-worker.
[47] To be able to get transfer would be a relief to most female engineers who experienced the "weekend wife" syndrome.

Furthermore, vacancies inside the Peninsula were not always available, except a move to East Malaysia for a regional transfer. With the combinations of these inter-related factors, getting a transfer was relatively out of the question, particularly at PetCo Timur.

The aim to get a balanced representation in the ethnic distribution and religious affiliation of interviewers was unsuccessful. The fact was obvious because most of PetCo's employees were Malays. Without official data, the research findings showed a low representation of non-Malays working at PetCo at present. Whether it was the company's policies to have more Malays than non-Malays serving the company was yet to be known, but rumours spread saying that PetCo has to comply with certain ethnic ratios set up by the Government. Another version of the rumour was that PetCo offered less compensation than any other international petroleum-based industries to its employees.

This study managed to delve into the matter. Contrary to people's opinions, the non-Malay interviewees believed that other factors were more influential than the ethnic factor. The experiences of three non-Malay interviewees in applying for a job at PetCo affirmed this situation. Almost all the interviewees were PetCo scholarship recipients. However, when asked, *"was it difficult for you to apply a job at PetCo?"*, Razan (non-Malay), who was not a PetCo sponsored student said,

> *"Actually I applied not only (at) PetCo, I also applied at Exo, Sexo and PB because I really wanted to join (a) petroleum-based company. That's my aim after I grad. Few months after that I received a letter from PetCo asking me to (an) interview because they got a vacancy as a chemist, so I just went for that interview and after 1-month I've got to work here (in Timur). The other companies were silent or rejected my application".*

Since this study could not specify the exact number of the non-Malay employees who currently worked at PetCo, I had to ask around just to gratify my inquisitiveness about the ethnic representation in this company. According to Zunah (non-Malay), who worked at PetCo Selatan, she believed that there were not many non-Malay employees.

> *"I think (there is) one Indian guy as an executive over there, another one I think a technician. I think that was it. But the Chinese are quite few. There is one Chinese in this room. At least 5 to 10 Chinese are here but not many Indians. My first day working here that Indian executive cannot believe there is an Indian girl now, he looked at me weirdly and said to me after so many years I've been working here this is my first time looking at an Indian girl working at PetCo".*

Out of curiosity, I did ask why the ethnic misbalance was quite obvious in PetCo. These non-Malays interviewees said that most of their non-Malays friends were always in search of better and higher income offered elsewhere. Usually the private sectors could provide their needs. For example, other petroleum companies such as Exo, Sexo and PB[48] offered better remuneration than PetCo, while other private companies of different business interests in Malaysia were known for giving a greater annual bonus, allowances and incentives to their employees. These benefits were the main concern of most workers, particularly among the Chinese. Razan said,

> *"I don't know. I think it's more about money. People know that PetCo won't offer the best income that other companies, especially private ones. I have this friend who recently quit PetCo to work with Exo, which funnily only is opposite of us (because) she received higher pay. I mean a lot higher with so many extra allowances than us. But the bad thing is, she lost other benefits like housing or car loans. As well as so many extra hours she needs to spend at work. I think I work with PetCo due to have more security in future together with the image it carries".*

It is interesting to point out that one non-Malay interviewee explained that ethic discrimination was not happening, at least very less obviously in PetCo. In fact, based on her case, PetCo was the only petroleum-based company that had accepted her application. Other international companies such as Exo, Sexo and PB rejected her flatly. Even though this is an interesting view, I cannot substantiate the phenomena based on a single case. However, much literature cited that non-Malays, especially male Chinese were more drawn to work in private companies, which granted them a higher and better pay[49] [Demery and Chesher. 1990]. Zunah has added her view pertaining to the matter. She said,

> *"**Money** is an actual reason. Most of my friends are very ambitious. They want to have more **money**, which PetCo doesn't offer. Comparing to other private companies who employed chemists like us, I think PetCo offered the least. But you may wonder why I choose PetCo, right? (laugh). Well, apart from being sponsored by the company, which I have 7-year contract, I also would like to grab the loans benefits offered. I want to buy a car. Currently I'm using my father old car. In three months time after my probation period, I can apply for it. I believe at that time, my friends who do not own cars yet will envy me (laugh)". [* My highlight]*

Even though PetCo offered lesser wage benefits than other petroleum companies, it still could attract many potential employees. Some non-Malay employees might be interested in working for a company that offered a long-

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[48] PetCo, Exo Sexo and PB were pseudonyms used in this study to represent some international petroleum companies that have business ventures in Malaysia.
[49] This also happened at other Government agencies such as the Army and Police Forces. Due to less pay, the participation of the non-Malays in these agencies was very low. Only recently the Government decided to increase the net wage of the new recruits of both agencies.

term stability in the form of pensions as well as security by giving company loans to its employees. These benefits were not available at other petroleum companies or any private-based agencies. In their studies, Demery and Chesher [1990] also found that the risk-taking attitude of non-Malays of work choice sometimes enabled them to be more financially successful than their Malay counterparts.

In addition, scholarship opportunities were also offered to non-Malays. Its principle, to sponsor bright students was a well-known fact. Traditionally, PetCo's Educational and Training Department would choose the finest students in education who excelled in exams. Few excellent students were picked out for an A-level course as a preparation to be sent to universities abroad merely based upon their trial SPM exam[50]. In Zunah's case, she was selected to receive PetCo's scholarship due to her academic excellence at the university[51].

> *"I did my first year at T-College but it was paid by my parents then. Later when I was accepted to study at an UK University, PetCo has agreed to sponsor me".*

Although the representation of non-Malays was low, their words were interesting for the research. This study unearthed the working experience of non-Malay respondents at PetCo.

With regard to the ethnic issue, it seems appropriate to discuss the language barrier that appears to be problematical. It is commonly believed that most professionals in Malaysia feel that English is a comfortable means of interaction [Ahmad. 1993]. However, if a language crisis occurred to the laypersons of any ethnic groups, the response was to use *Bahasa*. Nevertheless, the situation might get complicated if a native dialect is used. The problem of dialect usage at PetCo Timur was evident for Razan.

> *"The real problem is the **language**, how to communicate with them (co-workers and subordinates). The first time I attended morning meeting, which is held everyday, they used Timur-Malay (which is a) dialect often than to use English (or even standard Malay). At first I didn't understand what are they talking about. I was sitting there like I was listening but I couldn't catch what are they talking. So that's is the main problem, the **language**, and they seldom used English. So it is much easier to communicate with them by using Malay but then my Malay is standard Malay. Sometimes they would laugh ha-ha-ha standard Malay (laugh)". [* **My highlight**]*

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[50] Usually the past academic and personal records of these students were scrutinised thoroughly before granting this special sponsorship arrangement.
[51] Zunah was awarded a 1st Class Degree in Chemical Engineering from the UK University. In fact many other interviewees were 1st Class Honours students, either from local universities or abroad.

The complexity of language was more of a peculiar feature at PetCo Timur than at the other two sites. Language problems at the workplace were an obstacle to the non-Malay employees because they could not work effectively in such an environment. The miscommunication faced by some non-Malay employees, especially the executives at PetCo, would make them unable to relay specific instructions to and co-ordinate projects with their subordinates, which was expected of them. Language could be seen as a mechanism of exclusion to separate specific workers from the rest in the workplace. PetCo Timur in particular was seen to be less sensitive about this communication issue, and appeared to let the employees deal with it themselves. It is difficult to identify the source of this language problem, but I believe it has something to do with the way of life at the Timur, which reflected the unconcerned attitudes of Timur community towards the outsiders.

Training

The discussion about training opportunities is important here because it will relate to the gendering aspects in the workplace, such as wage difference and discrimination.

It was quite obvious that the employees were required to undergo many practical courses and training throughout their working life at the company. Generally, managerial and technical subjects were the usual courses given to the employees. Every engineer in the company has to complete 16 technical courses that are compulsory within a stipulated time. In addition, employees have to attend the company's orientation course, such as the induction course and the personal development courses such as the stress management course. One of the reasons I found difficulty in fixing an appointment with the engineers was due to the clash with their training course schedule.

When asked who received more offers from the management in attending any training course, the respondents stated that more men were given such an opportunity (80 per cent) than the women (8 per cent), and about 12 per cent said it was equally offered to both genders. Tracing any discriminatory treatment in offering the training, respondent 304 said, *"at most times, male*

employees are treated better at work. If there are long-term technical courses, they are given to men". Additionally, respondent 151 believed that *"men (are given more opportunity for training) because simply there are more men in the company"*. On the other hand, respondent 250 believed that there was no distinction in gender but *"depends more on the training requirement"*. Gender inequality in training offering existed but it was relegated as a situational necessity.

PetCo classified particular training courses that were given to a particular group of employees. It was commonly known that the technical and management training courses were given only to the higher job grade. A comment from respondent 404, *"I think I am not qualified for this kind of training at all. Perhaps the management thinks the clerical staff would not need that, well, I don't know"*. Additionally, respondent 201 wrote, *"(I am) in clerical line. PetCo still could not find suitable such training courses for us"*. A remark from respondent 210 complained about the management of PetCo stating that, *"(I am) not in the technical line, and most conferences and seminars and management courses are for the executives. I am not"*. At this point their remarks inferred that the lower job grades were less likely to get training opportunities. For example, 68 per cent of the respondents who received technical courses were those that had at least a bachelor's degree.

To investigate their views on the courses they have received, a question on the degree of satisfaction was designed. Almost 63 per cent were satisfied with the courses they received, and 6 per cent were strongly satisfied. On the other hand, 10 per cent of the respondents gave their response of neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and 5 per cent were dissatisfied with the course they had attended. Among those who dissatisfied with the courses they had attended, the technical group voiced more dissatisfaction than the rest of the group (75 per cent). Razan said,

"I feel the content (of the training) was not specific, just too general".

A further inquiry was designed on the reason why they had taken the training courses. An agreement was reached that enriching one's skills and techniques in work was important. All respondents (100 per cent) agreed on that. Respondent 20 wrote that training courses *"enable to motivate myself (in work)"*. Respondent 171 has summarised, *"(taking training course) can upgrade my knowledge on the latest job requirement, it also can act as a booster for a better working*

environment and to establish a networking with others (especially) to enrich skills". Evidently training is important in developing employees' skills.

Additionally, other reasons gave by the respondents were to get away temporarily from the pressure of the workplace (47 per cent). Respondent 340 wrote, *"(I'm) able to travel outstation, once in a while".* It seemed that attending a training course was treated as escapism from the environment at work. Moreover, establishing friendships and networking were also related to training attendance. Respondent 4 wrote, *"to establish friendship or to know the staff of other sites so that it is easier to deal when the need arises".* However, not all of them attended the training willingly. Some of them felt that they were forced (39 per cent).

When they said that they have never received any training from the company, it did not immediately mean that they were excluded. Most of the cases were due to their newly appointed status in the company, or probably due to their status as contract staff for PetCo. However, respondent 150, who worked at the administration, believed that she *"was not nominated by the management maybe due to budget constraint".*

Conversely, this study found an interesting picture of PetCo's commitment in enriching expertise regardless of the fee rate, especially to its engineers. Cael said that the total cost of the two training courses she had recently attended were RM11000 (£1833.3). She was also sent for a 9-month training course in Japan. Since technical staff, especially the engineers, were the primary groups, the company would ensure they were given appropriate training exposure. One benefit of attending training abroad was to earn an overseas allowance, together with a monthly income. Cael described her experience at that time as the best experience she had at work. While training, she earned RM20000 (£3333.3) per month for an overseas allowance. Together with her monthly wages, she received roughly a sum of RM24000 (£4000) per month during her training period in Japan.

Apart from a normal training course as a source of skill upgrading, interviewees also mentioned that they had learnt new skills and technical expertise from the contractors and vendors.

I have discussed about the working situations at PetCo, now I want to relate the discussion of women at the workplace with the issue of work and children.

Pregnancy, Childbirth and Children

The seed of the dual-burden problem started when a female engineer got married but it grew when she got pregnant and finally bloomed when she had children. Many professional women have a problem when they come to have children [Arnup et. al. 1990: Brannen and Moss. 1988]. Uzma interpreted the view of the management on pregnancy, in which it has been seen as a 'problem'.

> *"They (the management) see pregnancy as a* **problem** *but actually it is a natural process". [* My highlight]*

I talked to a married female Human Resource Development Manager at PetCo Timur about women' performance at work. She said that female married engineers created problems for the management. Pregnancies, miscarriage, being physically weak, avoiding stand-by or on-call, being married to a non-local partner were major obstacles that limited female engineers from progressing further in their career. A direct result of this judgement was that some women might feel that they were being denied the chance of proving that they were capable of fulfilling the requirements of the job at the workplace [Corti et. al. 1995].

Women's inability to perform well at jobs due to the state of pregnancy perhaps suggested another psychological challenge, which never occurred to men [Jones and Causer. 1995]. Female engineers were unable to give their best performance at work due to some obvious problems related to pregnancy. In the end, it was male employees who grabbed the work opportunities and consequently benefited in their career.

The 'problem' of pregnancy affected women's commitment to work. Cael blamed herself for not showing professionalism in engineering. She said, *"I bring a bad image to the company"*[52]. Hers was not a unique case because

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[52] The actual incident was that she asked to be transferred from managing the engineering site to do the desk job because she had a miscarriage in her early stage of pregnancy due to the stress she had constantly experienced at the site.

throughout the completion of the 30 interviews in the first fieldwork, most female engineers somehow admitted that their working professionalism was lower than males, due to pregnancy.

I found her attitude of blaming herself for the unavoidable circumstance of being pregnant distressing. I believed married women could do nothing in this particular situation, unless they vowed not to get pregnant. And of course by doing so, it would be against the Malaysian standard of familial traditions, for every newly wed couple was expected to produce children [Chang. 1992: Jamilah. 2001]. In fact, this study showed that the idea of having children was deeply appreciated and greatly practised. For example, 60 per cent of the respondents and 16 interviewees have children (or were pregnant while the interviews were being conducted). In short, not to get pregnant was not an option at all because having more children in a family was always considered as a blessing [Jamilah. 2001]. Pregnancy was regarded as a natural thing that came along after the marriage [Crouch. 1996]. Newly married couples felt stressed when people kept asking them when they would have babies [Noraini. 2001].

On the other hand, women in Western countries have a different perspective in looking at the issue of marriage and children. The issue of children entirely rests between the cohabited couple. 'Child-free' is an option of not having children, which connects to the idea of their own free will [Hakim. 2000]. Childlessness is acceptable to women and men in Britain, European countries and the US, although most people routinely confirm the joys of raising children [Scott et. al. 1993].

Equal Opportunities and Promotions

If pregnancy has been regarded as an obstacle to progress at work, the appraisal system practised by PetCo would easily challenge the advancement of workers regardless of gender. The company was said to underline job performance as the most important criteria for assessment and promotion. However, Vel believed in the superficiality of the appraisal system. She said,

> *"In PetCo we have what we called PDA (an appraisal system) which is **not perfect** in itself. Sometimes you have not been recognised for the work that you have done". [* **My highlight**]*

However, it became gender discrimination at PetCo when male supervisors victimised their female engineers in evaluating the job performance, which jeopardised a woman's career progression. The assessment system minimised the prospect of women for better and higher positions in the company.

> *"Some male managers gave a low grade for female engineers. Some of us (her female colleagues) experienced this. Maybe you should talk to Ghusni because she had to face the problem recently. Her supervisor is not that supporting towards her".*
> [Haifa]

Moreover, the interviewees in my study simply did not want higher positions that would compete with family responsibility. They hesitated to pursue their career further. The most common explanations given by employees for the scarcity of women in senior posts was that many potentially eligible women left work to care for their families. Xena remarked,

> *"(There is) only one female plant manager at PetCo (but) she is single".*

Most interviewees in my study welcomed the idea of upgrading their position at work, but *"not too high"*. And if they were promoted, they just wished to have lesser responsibility than presently. Haifa talked in the same tone, but her case was unique because she did not want to get a promotion at all.

> *"No. I don't want a promotion. It does not mean that I want to be in the same position but I just don't want to be in the position that I have to do some sort of big responsibilities that I have to handle. **Promotion comes with bigger responsibilities.** So that is quite a big job for me". [* My highlight]*

Greater responsibilities mean extra work. Their inability to fulfil these responsibilities might indicate a failure on the workers' part. Additionally, women might not go that far because promotion, particularly in the technical line, was extremely competitive. Jaida spoke on behalf of others,

> *"(Promotion) is there at a certain stage in technical line but it is a bottleneck situation. Out of thousands of employees in that line, may be we can only find one or two ladies can reach the higher place, up to the manager position. Women are more at HR, Finance, Admin but very rare in technical".*

On the other hand, if a female engineer received promotion she might not be keen to accept it because usually promotion followed by a transfer. Jaida added,

> *"Ladies always think about family first. In PetCo, if you are promoted to a higher position, you have to move somewhere else. You'll be transferred. It will create a problem if you have children and if your husband is not a PetCo staff. You are not that moveable although you are keen to be promoted".*

But turning the situation around, it was less likely to be a problem if the husband was transferred because it is the Malaysian way that a wife (and family) will follow the husband [Chang. 1992: Crouch. 1996]. It is usually accepted that a woman's chance of getting a transfer is greater when the reason is to comply with her husband's transfer. Additionally, female employees at PetCo might get unpaid leave up to a few years to accompany their husbands for oversees assignments.

The Importance of Work

This study attempts to understand the importance of work to the respondents and how they view the effect of work on their family. In a previous study, Dex [1988] analysed a longitudinal research on the attitudinal change, particularly about the work satisfaction of British women towards work and home from the Second World War to the 1980s. Although women workers in her sample have achieved greater development in the workplace, she is convinced that they still tend to have a strong attachment to home and the family rather than with a career, especially when a priority crisis occurred.

Almost all of the respondents agreed with the statement that having a job would benefit both a woman and her family (92 per cent). A question on acquiring emotional security due to having a job received 83 per cent responses. The next question showed that almost 80 per cent believed that an industry in Malaysia could not be carried out successfully without women workers. Another question was linked to the gender relation. Seventy-three per cent of the respondents opposed the statement that *"a woman who works is taking away a job from a man"*. At this point this study found that the respondents were most likely to opine that work was important to them. It might also show the general trend that work has become relevant to women in Malaysia.

This study designed an open-ended question inviting the respondents to demonstrate in detail how they perceived the importance of work. An open-ended question gave respondents a greater freedom to answer the question in a way that suited their interpretation. Most experts in social research methodologies suggested rethinking the use of open-ended type in a questionnaire due to the most basic problems of a low response [May. 1997].

However, this questionnaire survived from having to face the same fate. Seventy per cent of the respondents in this study had responded to an open-ended question listed as number 30 in the questionnaire, *"why working is important to you"*. This could be considered as a generous response for an open-ended question in a questionnaire method.

Work for Money

The most frequent answers for the above open-ended question in the questionnaire rest on financial related reasons (77 per cent). See Chart 8.

Chart 8: The Percentage of the Respondents' Answer of an Open-Ended Question No.30 in the Questionnaire on the Importance of Work
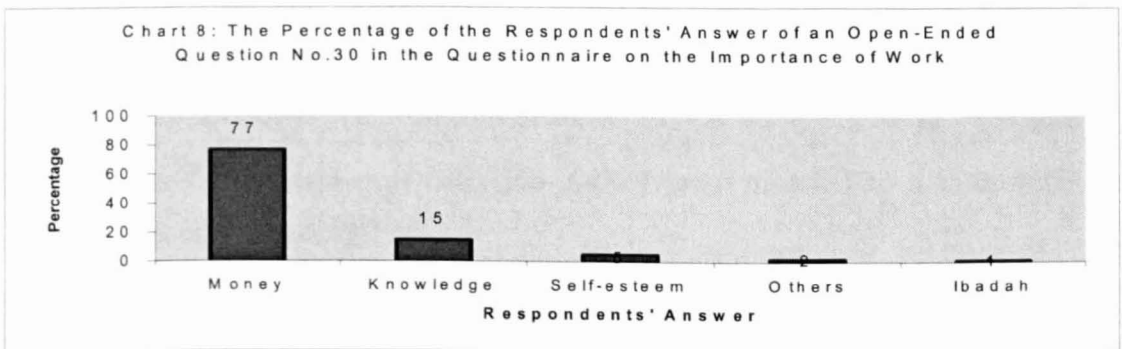
Similarly, although some interviewees repeatedly mentioned that increasing and applying knowledge were significant, it was also found that twenty-one interviewees cited that money was the main reason for them to work. Some interviewees associated having money with being independent in life. Elnoor said,

> *"(My job is important to me) because I can be independent, I don't need to rely on other people, and I can hold my money".*

They developed this issue as being self-independent with their money, to enjoy it and not feel guilty about spending it. This phenomenon became very visible among the married ones, because the money they brought home could add to the husband's income for the maintenance of the family.

Sharing the responsibility as a financial contributor in a family might affect women's judgement towards work. As shown here when the family was concerned, the participants would gather as much as money as possible so that they could live comfortably. Respondent 150 said, *"I want to make sure my children get whatever they want so that they won't feel left out compared to other children. And in doing so, I need to get a better income".*

Another justification was to support the family and to help the husband financially. For example, when I asked Alya why she worked, she replied,

> *"(I work because) to **complement** the income of my husband. Because we are used to this **lifestyle**, very used to have (this lot of) money, do not face problem to spend. A few times once in a while I discuss the matter with my husband, what if I quit? He said, yes I can quit but we have to limit our expenditure, change our lifestyle. I can see my neighbours who are not working, only the husband works but the wife stays at home, they still can manage. But they have (it) in the early beginning. They happen to be in that position, thus they are used to that. But we are so used with this much money, so to stop working means we have to change our lifestyles". [* My highlight]*

Money becomes the glue that makes women stick to their job. They would stop working if they could still receive the same amount of money that they received every month.

> *"If I can get the same amount of salary by staying at home then I won't work".*
> [Haifa]

Or perhaps they would quit their job if they were married to a man with a strong financial standing.

> *"Once I have a thought to quit my job. I would like to marry to someone rich and stay at home (laugh). In that way I still have the money but the best part is that I don't have to work for that".*
> [Piah]

Even though most interviewees were married to men in well-paid professional jobs, the need to reduce the current comfortable lifestyle has a negative implication should they decide to quit their job.

Psychological Health

Respondent 227, who is married and has children, unabashedly declared that working was important to her because it could be *"an escape or my children drive me up to the wall if I'm at their back and they will look for me all the time".* In other words, she was implying that domestic affairs were unappealing to her. The retort above might project the same experience that working outside the home was a chance to break away from children's demanding attitudes. Most definitely, her case would illustrate the scenario when women workers found they had more free time at work, and wished to escape from the non-stop labours of domestic works [Cowan. 1989: Crompton and Harris. 1999a].

By working outside the home, she would have time and space of her own and therefore it was good for her emotional health [Repetti et. al. 1989]. Women were more likely to feel depressed at home than stressed in the workplace

[Ginn and Sandell. 1997: Hochschild. 1997]. The less appealing situation at home would generate psychological stress to some married employed women [Noraini. 2001]. Left with no other opportunities to socialise, the workplace would be the next best thing to boost their life.

The participants also cited positive implications to their emotions and feelings. According to them, work gave a sense of purpose to life, stimulated the brain, self-worthiness, self-esteem and confidence, as well as providing a motivation to life. Respondent 92 indicated, *"Work is part of women's life (now). You work because you will get certain benefits out of it"*. In a similar tone, respondent 392 viewed, *"because already used to it (working). It is a part of my life now"*. Respondent 238 believed that working *"able to avoid her from (experiencing) boredom"*. In addition to that, respondent 374 wrote, *"Work is important to me because it gives me the opportunity to think, as well as to improve my skills (in work), to follow the current social changes and (working also) can teach children (about life)"*.

Frequently, work offers positive effects to women, such as enhancing self-esteem, satisfaction in life as well as preparing for the future.

In the Case of Divorce and Abandonment

Despite the urge to stay married, marriage dissolution happens to Malaysians. The Population and Housing Census of Malaysia 2000 stated that for every 1,000 married people there were 15.2 divorce cases among the Malays; 10.4 divorces for the Indians; and 9.1 for the Chinese [Malaysia. 2000]. The divorce rate among non-Muslims has increased since two years ago. Additionally, there was an increase of 135 per cent with 3,793 divorce cases in 2002 compared to 1,613 in 2000. However, the case was decreased for Muslims from 13,536 cases in 2000 to 11,004 cases in 2002 with a decrease of 16.3 per cent [Malaysia. 2003a].

There was a sharp decline in the divorce rate in Malaysia from 3.7 per thousand population aged 15 years and above in 1981 to 1.8 in 1990 [Tan and Ng. 1998]. However, female-headed families due to divorce are on the rise. Based on the Population Census in 1980 [Malaysia. 1980a], 17.7 per cent of families that were headed by females were due to widowhood, male migration and divorce, then increased to 18.5 per cent in 1991 [Malaysia. 1991b]. Briefly, although these figures were not very high by the British

standard, an awareness of the possibility of divorce could be an additional reason for women wanting to secure financial independence.

Divorce or a husband's abandonment in a marriage could occur at anytime. Securing a job is thus significantly important for most Malaysians, especially due to unforeseeable situations. As reported, there were 711,000 women-headed families in 2001 [Malaysia. 2002], however the Employee Provident Fund (EPF) allocated only RM2000 (£333.3) for the widow [Malaysia. 2001f]. Some female employees had almost prepared for this bleak future. Work was regarded as a safety net so that the continuation of her family would go on.

> *"Women have to work. In case something happens in future, perhaps if husbands passed away, what is going to happen to us, who are going to take care of our family? So we have to work. Women have to be tough". [* My highlight]*
> [Syaza]

On the surface, this finding can be safely viewed as an inclination among Malaysian women to see a positive effect attached to work. They considered that working is important for security [Jamilah. 1992a].

A few interviewees stated that husbands should not be trusted blindly. And they should not let every single thing in life be dependent on husbands because women did not know the route that would lead them to. Therefore they must hold on to work because it could help them to survive in life. Vel cited,

> *"To me I would say (work) is very important. I remembered when I was getting married, the only thing that my mother said was no matter how many children you have please don't quit job. It was the promise to my mother that I would keep on working as long as I could. I truly believed in that because we don't know what happened in future, right? To me, I think my job is very important".*

In Vel's case, her parent viewed her daughter's participation in paid employment as desirable because it enabled a woman to "stand on her own feet" in a calamity such as a widowhood or marital breakdown.

The finding so far should suffice to provide an explanatory basis that women in Malaysia agree that employment is important especially, for their social, psychological and economic conditions.

Other Related Reasons

Apart from those reasons, some others cited that they achieved life satisfaction by working (71 per cent). The fact that they were proud to be working at PetCo intensified their satisfaction at work. Respondent 58 said, *"it is satisfying to be able to contribute my skills to an organisation like PetCo"* and respondent 210 wrote, *"I wish to be part of PetCo forever"*. Their self-declaration of experiencing satisfaction at work is very much related to the pride working at PetCo. Farah said,

> *"I enjoy being an engineer at PetCo. I am proud to be associated as a PetCo's employee"*.

Other reasons for the importance of work for the respondents were to gain social freedom, experience, skill and knowledge. Additionally, some respondents have also mentioned that they wanted to apply the knowledge they have gained throughout their academic years. Respondent 2 viewed that *"working enables me to apply (the knowledge from) the textbooks and theories that I have learnt. It provides some sort of satisfaction to complete a task and project successfully. Any difficulties can be viewed as challenges, and that contributes even greater satisfaction once overcame"*. In addition, twenty-seven interviewees who were PetCo sponsored students cited that they worked to fulfil the working contract with the company. They were expected to pay hundreds of thousands of Malaysian *Ringgit* if they wished to be exempt from the study contract.

However, in many cases women have to reconsider their working position, particularly when it concerns their relationship with other people, especially those who are close to them. To put one detailed answer, which has been written by respondent 102, *"I consider working as important. (Because) by working, I can feel that I can do and achieve anything if I put my mind into it, which is good for self-esteem and self-belief. But working is not a definite importance compared to family life. If I start a family later, I could and would be able to leave a working life (if the need arises). If the relationship with the family gives a sense of security and satisfaction, then there should be no reason why I can't stay at home (and maintain the relationship). This may not go well with the feminist (view) but I believe that the main happiness and satisfaction in life is to have a good and solid relationship with a husband and lots of kids. Having a job and personal wages are just supplementary to me"*, might nicely summarise a delicate relationship of women, work and family. Although this particular respondent was still single, she already had firm thoughts on the importance of family life rather than pursuing her career further. This point of view has a direct effect on the research's hypothesis, whereby some Malaysian women, in spite of

everything they have achieved in their career, still put the family and home as important in life. I will elaborate this issue in Chapter Eight.

Overtime

As executives to the company, engineers did not have a paid over-time allowance[53]. However, nearly 50 per cent of the total respondents from the questionnaire said that they worked beyond normal working hours. What could the reasons be for doing overtime?

Ninety eight per cent did overtime to finish the task, 28 per cent said for additional financial assistance and 24 per cent of the respondents admitted that they did it for extra money. From this statistical finding, this study might conclude that heavy workloads and financial desires were the main reason for some of the respondents to do overtime.

Money Factor

Of those who said that they did overtime to get extra money, 77 per cent of them have a diploma or lower academic qualification, whereas only 23 per cent of them have a bachelor's degree. When seniority was taken into consideration, 52 per cent of the employees who have served the company for less than 2 years said that they did overtime just for money. Of them all, 39 per cent come from the clerical position, 10 per cent come from administration and 7 per cent come from the general support group. Almost 84 per cent of the respondents who did overtime in the workplace received less than RM2000 (£333.3) per month.

By contrast, the respondents who have a higher income were less likely to say that they did overtime. Less than 10 per cent of the respondents who received an income of RM2001 to RM4000 (£333.5 to £666.7) did overtime and only 3 per cent who received RM4001 to RM6000 (£666.8 to £1000) did so.

Apparently, lower paid women worked overtime to get money whereas higher paid women were unlikely to do so.

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[53] Normally, the starting income for the executive at most Malaysian companies and agencies is around RM2000 per month (£333.3) and most probably they expect to receive extra allowances such as entertainment fees (to entertain clients), fuel and accommodation fees (for outstation tasks) and many others, depending on the job designation.

Job Completion

Although executives are not paid for the overtime they take, they have to do it in order to complete the job. For example, when a job position was taken into consideration, 63 per cent were at the higher job grade. By contrast, it is clearly less likely for the lower job grade to do overtime (37 per cent). The more educated workers usually rushed to carry on working and lengthened their working time in the workplace due to the work deadlines. This overtime culture among professionals also showed in Britain [Bradley. 1999: Wacjman.1996]. At least four interviewees admitted that they had to do overtime especially when they were involved in major projects. A few of them would bring the task home, but most of them would rather extend the office working hours.

Corcoran-Nantes and Roberts [1995] cited that apart from the type of job, marital status and family condition, the disinclination to continue working among women workers largely depended on the age factor. When age was analysed, it seemed that younger respondents did more overtime than the older ones. Twenty-nine per cent of the respondents in the age range of 21 to 25 did overtime, followed by at 26 to 30 years old (22 per cent). See Table 16.

Table 16: The Percentage of the Respondents Who Do Overtime by Age Range

Age Range	Percentage
20 and below	1.5
21-25	29.4
26-30	22.5
31-35	15.5
36-40	16.3
41-45	11.6
46-50	2.3
51 and above	0.8

Probably the eagerness of the younger respondents to demonstrate their commitment to work was due to the appraisal system practised by PetCo. They were on the brink of establishing themselves in the company so that they might be granted better wages and a higher grade. On the other hand, it was presumed that the older employees were less interested in committing to work because they were already considered the seniors in the company and they might have already received the top income scale. In addition, the younger groups generally were still single, thus they have more free time to be at workplace because they did not have to concentrate on family matters.

Escapism

Although only 4 per cent of the respondents confessed that overtime was a way for them to escape from doing the domestic work, the subject of escapism from housework is very important here because it relates to the participants' view of household management in Chapter Eight. Housework might be seen as a dull kind of job, and they prefer staying at work and completing office task rather than rushing back home. Hochschild [1990] affirmed that there were an increasing number of female employees who preferred a working environment to their lives at home.

Though the percentage of women in my study admitted working overtime as escapism was small, nonetheless it showed that they also shared the same tendency with women in the US in spending more time at work rather than rushing home to do the housework.

Workaholics

The English term 'workaholics' is commonly used in Malaysia, which has nothing to do with being emotionally unhealthy due to too much work. In a Malaysian context, the term workaholic refers to the workers who work a lot or spend a lot of time at work. Compared to the Western perspective, the term workaholic is nonchalantly accepted by most Malaysians as a correct description of too much commitment they have at the workplace.

Forty per cent have openly admitted that they were workaholics. Of those who said so, 50 per cent of them have a bachelor's degree and above. When age was taken into consideration, it appeared that female employees in their 20s were more likely to say that they were workaholics (45 per cent), followed by the 30s (34 per cent), the 40s (20 per cent) and the 50s (1 per cent). This is a phenomenon of the life cycle change among the respondents. They showed a strong interest in work for the first few years of their working life, then their enthusiasm drifted away, especially when they started to settle down, and declined once they have children. The elderly group was less workaholic than the younger group, possibly because they had already reached a contented situation whereby they did not have to assert their working potential to the company while awaiting for retirement. However, the

younger employees still have to prove themselves in the company that required them to work harder and longer in the workplace.

This study managed to show the general trend that working commitment decreases with the increase of age [Hakim. 1999]. Of the non-workaholics, the married respondents showed the biggest representation with 71 per cent, whereas the singles accounted for 24 per cent. The enthusiastic attitude of the singles to commit to work and career compared with the married ones was seen more likely to happen due to the absence of a second job at home. Hochschild [1990] summarised the experience of the married employees who have the so-called "two-households", whereby they have to pay attention in both places. Realising that they have another responsibility to take home, they would not dare do extra work in the workplace, or perhaps bring the work home. Many married interviewees in this study showed the same inclination. For them, when the clock strikes 5:00 pm, it means time to spend with the family.

Rating at Work

When asked to rate themselves at work, most of them believed that they were good at work (60 per cent) and fairly good at work (25 per cent) while 10 per cent rated themselves excellent at work. Only 0.4 per cent believed that they are bad at work. This particular data indirectly steered towards a strong self-belief among the respondents.

It is also interesting to note here that the respondents who have already served 9 years and above at PetCo were more open in rating themselves as excellent (11 per cent) and good (39 per cent) at work, and only 5 per cent of them said fairly good at work. By contrast, only 13 per cent of the respondents who have worked in less than 2 years said they were excellent or good at work. It appeared that the longer the employees worked for the company, the more secure they felt with their work.

Giving-up Work

In so far this study might have understood that the tendency to stop working magnifies when the clash of home and family commitments with work occur. But in what conditions are female employees likely to leave (or to stay in)

their job? Do the single and married ones share the same feeling about leaving (or staying in) the job?

The majority of the single employees were in the age range of 21 to 25 years old (32 per cent). Of them, 22 per cent had the intention of stopping work when they got married. A further 19 per cent of them might quit the job after having the first child. Furthermore, almost 20 per cent of them had the intention of quitting if their husbands had sufficient income for family maintenance. There is no such concrete explanation so far to clarify this particular situation, but suffice to bring in the influence of traditional values among the participants in looking at marital life.

A strong adherence to the traditional view towards having a domestic life is very clear here. Lidiya supplemented her view by saying,

> *"I won't stop working as long as I'm single. But if I have married, I might have to rethink about my career especially when I have my own family"*.

It seemed that having a higher educational level would not guarantee single female employees would go on working with the company. For example, almost 53 per cent of the respondents who possessed a bachelor's degree did not wish to be employed when they got married. Contrarily, McRae et. al. [1991] found that women in higher degrees in the UK are likely to retain the job, however a number of them do stop work.

Likewise, despite having a bachelor's degree, 45 per cent of the respondents said that they would stop working once their spouse had a sufficient income to support the family. Additional data on marital status has further confirmed that a husband's adequate income was much awaited so that they might be able to leave their job. Seventy-five per cent of the married respondents would rather not be employed if their husbands could provide adequately for the family. Additionally, 59 per cent of the respondents who have children or dependents would do the same. Clearly the answers provided by most respondents implied that the financial attachment to work was significant for them. If they could earn sufficient money without the need to go to work, they would rather stay at home and manage the family. Bringing in the contextual meaning of the breadwinner in Malaysia,

apparently most respondents accepted the situation that it is the responsibility of the husbands to provide the economic needs of the family.

Additionally, 54 per cent of the female employees from the technical line were most willing to stop working once they have their first child. It is equally important to note that most of them comprised the productive age group. Thirty-five per cent of them were in the age range of 21 to 25 years old and 25 per cent at 26 to 30 years old have had the intention of stopping work once they have their first child. It should be a worrying issue for PetCo because employees with a technical background were considered as the backbone of the company. Frequent turnover among the technical employees would negatively affect the company.

In addition, among the previously PetCo sponsored students, six of them expressed wanting to quit the job at PetCo once the working contract had expired. Three of them would divert their career to be interior designers, while others wish to establish a business joint venture, open up a restaurant or simply just to stop working. Except for Miza, who would finish her job once her work contract had been fulfilled and concentrate solely on the family, others did not mean that they would stop work completely. They still wished to work, but not at PetCo. Their choice of work would be self-employment. To work independently meant that they would be able to manage their time properly between work and the family. Syaza said,

> *"Right now I can say that I'm more in the business line. I prefer (to have) business of my own or having partnership in business regardless whether it is only convenience store or laundry outlet. Since the time is flexible as well as the space is accommodating for my children I can spend more time with them".*

Ghusni had a similar tone, but she added the need to equip herself with the necessary means, particularly the financial support, image and knowledge of the business.

> *"Greatest achievement is not yet achieved (laugh) because I actually planned to have my own business, to open an interior designing outlet. Having a small business like that would benefit my children. If I want to start establishing one now, I need to have financial back-ups and (most importantly) knowledge on that business. I believe to be involved in interior designing you need some sort of certificate on paper that would convince people of your ability. You need to show that you got qualification in this field".*

Further discussion of this career diversion phenomenon among female engineers occurs in Chapter Seven. Needless to say also here that just

because respondents expressed their view about what they would do in future, did not mean that they would actually do it.

A more neutral question has been designed without the existence of any marital implications[54], yet most respondents who have children or dependents would still stop working for PetCo (69 per cent). This particular finding might show a traditional tendency for Malaysian women to stay at home and care for their children and family. As a traditional perspective is one important dimension for this study, I will outline a detailed discussion about this issue in Chapter Nine.

Conclusion

This chapter explored the experiences of female workers in PetCo, which sometimes is similar yet at other times unlike the experience of women workers in Western countries. Observably, they shared the same inclination with Western women to participate in employment due to several factors. Economic necessity clearly applied to women workers regardless of marital status. Considering how life changes could happen, women of all walks of life might have to decide on earning for themselves as well as for their families too. This study established that women worked not only for 'pin money' but also most importantly to contribute to their household income. In fact, there were some respondents who had to do overtime due to financial need. In many instances in this study, it was found that money was the apparent reason for women workers to work, and money was also the reason for them to stop working.

Women workers in the West were less likely to cite money as the main reason they work outside home [Pahl. 1991]. Nonetheless, the need to work to earn money for a pleasant lifestyle among female workers in PetCo was one point that is similar to the experience of Western societies. On the other hand, women workers in the West are less likely to feel the influence of social sanctions on their private lives as their colleagues did in Malaysia. Take the example of children. They are in a better position to choose whether to have children or not, while committed to their career. It was not the same case for most women workers in Malaysia, for marriage was socially sanctioned and

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[54] Question 32:4 *"I will be working as long as it suits me".*

children would naturally come following the marriage. Consequently, family problems were easily blamed on women, especially the career ones.

Even though women workers in this study might see household work as dull and thus would like to escape it by doing overtime at work, they still considered family and home as the priority in life. In many instances interviewees considered that having a family was their greatest achievement. Likewise, Brannen [1992] also showed a glaring similarity among the British female workers that they would give up employment if necessary.

This situation might increase the dilemma of choosing between family and career among the professionals. Marriage and pregnancy could be understood as sources of tension among women workers [Roskies and Carrier. 1992]. If professional female employees in Western countries were said to have problems at work when children arrived on the scene, women of the same group in PetCo started to experience difficulty at work when they became pregnant. The management regarded pregnancy as a 'problem' to the company. Even though some employees believed that pregnancy was a natural process, they also agreed that their irregular state of health due to pregnancy jeopardised the productivity and the profit of the company. On many occasions they blamed themselves for their inability to work efficiently for the company. In Cael's case, her loyalty and commitment to the company was very obvious, which in effect legitimised any sort of prejudice and discrimination. It is normal to find the function of gender discrimination at work in many organisations around the globe [Bradley. 1999: Hakim. 1995: 1991: Walby. 1997]. However, the situation was more intricate in Malaysia due to the attachment of the employed women's personal choice for family life rather than career life, as well as the involvement of the normative value of the society towards women's employment.

In this chapter, I have described the work situations of women in PetCo. I showed the similarity and contrast cases within the workplace between them and the women in the UK and US, for example their inclination to employment, the prejudices and discrimination from the management. I also discussed their motivation to working, overtime, their views about marriage and children. Following this, I will explain the issue of marriage, children and

home in length in Chapter Eight and Nine. However before indulging in that, in the next chapter, I will first examine critically the working prospect for women who are involved in a male dominated working space such as engineering.

Introduction

One purpose of this study is to understand the experience of professional female workers in Malaysia in a male dominated occupation. Female engineers are the specific research participants that I am interested in. The Ministry of Human Resource Development reported that engineering, together with medicine, architecture and accounting, is the principal occupational category for the nation's development [Malaysia. 2001e]. However, recent data has shown that female engineers in this country constitute only 11 per cent of the overall figure [Malaysia. 2002][55].

This chapter expands the critical issues surrounding women in engineering in Malaysia. Men are firmly established in engineering. Women, on the other hand, are looking for a position to work together with the men in this field. However, a female engineer represents an anomaly. She has crossed an invisible but well-defined boundary from the private, feminine world of women and entered a masculine world where she is competing with men [Reskin and Roos. 1990].

There are two aspects that are important, firstly, whether it is a consequence of a gendered nature of the subject choices in the education system, and secondly whether discrimination at work is still prevalent. I was interested in exploring the paradox of women in engineering. How do they make their way into the male-dominated field of engineering? To what extent are they able to break through the rough technicality of engineering jobs? What were the critical steps that made them choose engineering? The way in which engineering has been practised in PetCo might be a unique case, which is not shared by engineers at other places.

This study used thirty interviewees that include twenty-three female engineers and seven other professionals, such as geologists and chemists. Female engineers are the main research group in this study[56]. They are a

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[55] The same statistical data also showed women's participation was lower than males in law (35 per cent), medicine (33 per cent) and architecture (18 per cent). Only in accountancy women were the majority at 54 per cent.
[56] A few female scientists, especially geologists and chemists, were also included due to the fact of their active involvement in the male-dominated occupations. I was selective in choosing other scientists because there appeared to be important differences in personality and values between scientists and engineers and between people in different fields of

group of workers, which are different from the vast majority of other female occupations. The engineering profession is seen as a gendered space that segregates women and men [Devine. 1992]. It suggests a strong 'deviant' image for women [Barbercheck. 2001].

The chapter starts with some discussions of female engineers' experiences at PetCo, especially the similarities and contrasts compared with other engineering companies in the UK and US. Then this chapter details the critical steps that caused women to join engineering. It then discusses the suitability of engineering for women, and consequently explains the prospect of engineering for women in Malaysia. Most importantly, since women engineers are actually encroaching into a male dominated area, it is also pertinent to discuss the gendered issues of work in the engineering field.

PetCo as Petroleum Engineering Company

The term 'engineer' may carry different meanings in different countries. In Britain the title 'engineer' has been used to encompass a very wide range of occupations ranging from a craft to professional level [Newton. 1987]. However in Malaysia, there is no such confusion between engineers and other related occupational categories such as technicians or tool men. Engineers were the educated group who received at least a bachelor's degree in engineering at tertiary level. In most situations they received assistance from technicians and tool men.

Before further discussion, I need to specify particular occupational categories such as engineers, management and technicians that are repeatedly applied in relation to engineering. Who are they and what do they do?

Engineers are the middle management in the company, which can be divided into two groupings. Firstly, engineers on a technical ladder (or the machine-oriented engineer) know the technical operation of the projects. They solve any occurring problems and foresee strategies to counter measure any possible crisis. Briefly, this type of engineer deals with the machinery and its functioning processes. Secondly, engineers on a non-technical ladder (or the

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science. The non-engineer interviewees (N=7) were selected based on the seniority level and high position in PetCo, judged to be extremely influential factors in exploring the paradox of feminine nature in the private life and the masculine work culture of the public life.

people-oriented engineer) liase with the management. They normally audit the documents and monitor the overall projects, sometimes acting as a secretary at a project meeting.

The management refers to the top managers, ranging across the board of directors, the management committees, the departmental heads and the engineers' supervisors who decide the overall functioning of PetCo. The technicians, on the other hand, are the trained technical assistants to the engineers who have a technician-training certificate from PeTec[57]. Most technicians are males, and only a minority of them are females. All engineers at PetCo received assistance from a technician group to ease the work.

Even though the role of technicians was not discussed in detail, most interviewees agreed that the technicians' contribution at work was vital.

> *"Any engineering tasks that involve with physical activities are done by the technicians. Basically engineers at PetCo charge people (technicians) to do the work. But in order to charge the technicians you have to be a hands-on. At this point I'm lacking but I definitely can contribute well in designing the project.*
> [Cael]

These technicians did the 'dirty' tasks. Engineers were said more or less to give instructions to the technicians on what should be done on the site. Planning, designing and overseeing projects were their main tasks. But every engineer was expected to know how to trouble-shoot and give technical advice should problems on the field occur. In many instances, female engineers said that their job specifications were merely about co-ordinating the working activities. After supplying instructions to their subordinates on what to do, they would check the progress of the work occasionally. Haifa talked on behalf of other female engineers in PetCo,

> *"(We do go offshore) but it is more co-ordinating (the work). (We) do not do it ourselves. Leave it to our technicians"*

Due to having assistance from the technicians, PetCo could not be regarded as a wholly technical engineering company because its engineers might only need to supervise, monitor and leave the technical tasks to the technicians or contractors. Yamni said,

> *"(As engineers) we can always ask the contractors or our technicians to do that (the job), but if you work at a technical base company, you have to do the job by yourself".*

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[57] PeTec is PetCo's technical educational centre that offers technical courses for school leavers as well as skill upgrading courses for PetCo's technical staff.

This situation may be distinctive to PetCo's compared to other engineering companies. In this study at least four interviewees clearly opined that working at PetCo was less stressful compared to other international petroleum companies or manufacturing factories in the country. Ely-Fadwah, who had worked for more than 2 years with a textile-manufacturing factory before joining PetCo believed there was a relaxing atmosphere at PetCo compared to the company she had previously worked for, she opined, *"over there (at the factory) was more hectic than here"*. Furthermore, Alya's opinion represented the voices of others.

> *"I think we are a bit laid back compared to other petroleum companies. It is not that stressful, I think. Normally, only once in a while this department gets messy with works especially when we have certain projects or activities. That's all"*.

The basic principle of teamwork became the working pattern that operated the whole functions of the company. Sorge and Warner [1986] viewed that there is a variety of organisational types that are significant to each society, and PetCo seemed to adopt the chain of a hierarchical bureaucratic system. The technicians were the real operators, while the engineers were the supervisors of the production process. At the same time, the engineers have their own individual supervisors who were usually the head of the department.

PetCo seemed to follow the Japanese engineering style rather than the British model. Lam [1996] observed that firstly, unlike in Britain where firms seek 'ready-made' engineers from the labour market, Japanese companies accept full responsibility for providing firm-specific training and continuous development for their engineers, which was the paramount interest of PetCo as well. Secondly, most of the British engineers reported working on their individual tasks or projects, whereas the majority of the Japanese engineers reported working in a group [Lam. 1993], which was also a characteristic of PetCo. Ely-Fadwah illustrated the teaming system at PetCo,

> *"I'm a project leader to a team group. We are supposed to handle the technical and the administration of that project. As a leader I delegate the works to the members and set the dateline for the works so that we are able to complete certain projects on time. I enjoy working like this even though I have to admit at first it was a bit awkward to lead and manage male members (laugh)"*.

PetCo was not an engineering company, but engineering was one of its principal labour departments. Instead of modelling the British style, PetCo seemed to adopt a Japanese management style.

The Critical Step

It has been argued elsewhere that the traditional labelling of engineering as a 'man's world' makes the process of choosing engineering by female entrants quite distinctive [Cockburn. 1985b: Davidson. 1984: Newton. 1987]. Based on that argument, my study sought to know what the significant points are in the lives of female engineers when deciding that engineering was their career path? To understand this, I examined the life stages of the female engineers from their student years until their working life.

In my interviews I probed the way in which the women had taken the critical step to opt for engineering. I asked them about their life ambitions and the process leading up to the point where they were following a definite path into the profession. Due to the fact that engineering is a non-traditional choice of profession for women, I had expected to find a high level of enticement into engineering from an early stage among my interviewees. The home environment and experiences at school and university might be the central forces that shaped their interest in engineering.

The Influences at Home

Section H in the interview guide asked about the influences encountered by the interviewees when choosing engineering as their profession later in life. Information on the interviewees' family background was of great consequence in understanding the effect of having professional family members on their career choice. To have a positive role model in one's family might have some bearing on interviewees' attitudes towards engineering. By contrast, the interviewees themselves might be positively referred to as a role model for the younger members of the family.

Having and/or becoming a positive figurative model were regularly quoted in this study. Parents' occupations appeared to influence the career choice of the children in a family [Burke. 1994]. Nineteen interviewees have professional parents, mostly their fathers. Some of these parents worked (and a few are still working) as an engineer, either practicing engineering or teaching in the field.

Simultaneously, the interviewees might also turn out to create a positive image to the younger members of the family, particularly among the siblings, cousins and relatives. Needless to say that there were also cases whereby the occupations of the older siblings influenced the career choice of engineering among the interviewees. However, this study was more concerned about the effect that the interviewees had on the younger family members, in order to show a chain of effect on the occupational outcome in their lives. Seventeen interviewees elucidated the situation in which they had become the positive exemplar to the other family members and relatives.

> *"I have two brothers and I'm the only girl. My (younger) brother is studying in material engineering now. I think he got my influence to pursue in this field. I'm happy because it was part of my responsibility as an elder sibling to provide a good example in life to him".*
> [Ghadat-Hidni]

Becoming a role model to the family motivates female employees in life. They assumed that other members of the family might follow in their footsteps, so they had to show their maximum ability academically and be successful. The burden was even higher for the first child in a family. Bazla said,

> *"In a way **being an elder**, (I) have a very **big responsibility** to my younger brother, who is just graduated at the matriculation centre. He looked upon me (as his role model). So I said to myself that **I have to be strong.** If I appear to be weak then he might be weak too. I don't want that to happen" [* **My highlight**]*

The role model effect showed the occupational success of an older member might determine the future occupation of a younger member of a family. Since engineering is a reputable profession in Malaysia, a younger sibling often pursues a similar engineering career like that of an elder family member. Interviewees felt a responsibility to be the inspirational figure to other family members. Social responsibility towards the family was significant among the respondents.

In the first place, what is the factor that causes the career choice in one's life? Arguably, this phenomenon might be shaped by individual academic experiences.

The Experience of the Students and the Views of the Lecturers in Engineering

Newton [1984] concluded that most girls are more likely to choose engineering due to their interest in and talent for Mathematics. The

interviewees in my study also commented that Mathematics, together with Science subjects particularly Physics and Chemistry, were their favourite subjects at school and university. They cited that numerical calculation was their strong point, but they were weak in memorisation of facts. Additionally, Rees [1992] found that Mathematics has been described as 'critical filter' to a whole range of subjects in higher education that lead directly to well-paid careers.

I asked about some traces of gender discrimination in engineering departments at the university. Almost everyone said that they had no problem while studying engineering. They received support from lecturers and tutors, as well as friends and parents. In fact, lecturers were very supportive, except in one case when a male lecturer openly criticised female students. Kaisah shared her experience when *"a (male) lecturer appeared to show more interest in male students. I think he did not think that women qualified to study engineering. I could feel some sort of discrimination there. He sometimes cynically said in the class, oh women always late. What is that supposed to mean? Yes I was late that day but he should not make generalisation that all women like that, right?"* I was interested to know more about her experience at the university. I asked how many female students were in the class. Kaisah said,

> *"Only two ladies out of 40 students were graduated in my engineering department. The first year I could see many females but by the next year the number were decreasing"*.

The lack of representation of female students in engineering not only happened at universities abroad but also was faced by local universities. However, the problem was more acute since an ethnic quota was also applied. The ratio was 40:60 for the *Bumis* against the non-*Bumis*[58]. Jaida explained the situation,

> *"Not many Malays wanted to do engineering at my university. We could not even supply that 40 per cent allocation. Engineering was very tough and constantly rejected (unsuccessful) students or asked students to repeat the paper. We were afraid of these facts. In the end, there were only ten Malay students left in the final year compared to 60 Chinese and Indian students and I was one of the two female Malay students in the class.*

The gender ratio imbalance in any discipline of engineering is common at various universities. Acquiring a degree has allowed women to venture into engineering professions. However, the small number of women on the

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[58] The Malaysian Government has only recently abolished the ethnic quota of the university entrance with the introduction of a merit-based system in the country [Malaysia. 2003b].

university's engineering course is likely to ensure the persistence of gender segregation within the engineering profession [Crompton and Sanderson. 1987: Devine. 1992].

Realising that I needed to investigate further into women and engineering in Malaysia from people other than students, I set up interviews with three engineering lecturers. I wish to know about the performance of female engineering students at the university. In general all the three lecturers informed me that there was no difference of commitment and ability between genders. The only difference was the way they coped with the nature of the course. Rania, a female lecturer elaborated,

"Well I think basically they do not have problems in absorbing the theoretical part of the subject, but when it comes to the practical courses in the lab, they might be struggling a bit. I do admit women are good at the theoretical part but a little weak in its practicality".

Although Rais also believed both genders were capable on the course, male students were in a better position. He viewed,

"Both struggled, both aimed for the best. However maybe males have a bit of advantage. It is not much actually, except being a man he may be more familiar technical with terms and things faster and (thus more) competent than female students. Maybe, because they have been exposed to the technical things and tools earlier than females. That maybe true, in fact there is a quote of "man and tools".

Additionally, as engineering classes usually comprised of more male students, there existed a male networking culture. This culture was quoted as one of the factors that slowed down female students' performance on the course. Rais went on to explain,

"From my experience, male students fare better than female students. I don't know why is this happening. Perhaps they are bigger in number so more discussions are frequently done among them. I'm not saying female students do not have discussions among them. It was not true because I know they are really trying and striving (in the course). But it is actually the fact that usually the best engineering student is male so other male students can get benefit from him".

On the whole female students are as competent as men are academically. According to another male lecturer Riddeen, *"they (female students) can challenge the dominance of male students in engineering, but somehow I can feel that they are not confident (to be) in that profession"*, and he further blamed the family and children that contributed to this situation. He cited, *"I have (one) student who is married and having a child. She experienced a lot of problems with her study"*. Later he said *"it would be crude to say that women with family are unable to be good engineers or to pursue engineering to the highest level, but lets' face the fact, they are unable to manage both responsibilities*

effectively. Family is their priority". A lack of confidence and family issues were among the factors that slowed down women in their careers.

Riddeen added, *"Personally I think they should (prioritise the family). Family needs them (i.e. mothers) more than the fathers. However I have no problem for them to be engineers. But they are suitable to be in the engineering which is not involving the site works but more in the administration"*. I probed him further on what he meant about women in administration. He said, *"Working at administrative level whereby engineers manage the site engineers. They are the middle management people. This is in general very useful for both of them (the administrative engineers and site engineers) because each of them understands the nature of the jobs. For example, whenever they ask something related to the job requirement from the administration, the administrative engineers understand what they are talking about. So there is no communication problem. If other group of professionals are in that administrative level perhaps many problems will occur"*. This is informative about the nature of engineering in the organisation. It seems the middle manager engineers may be a new kind of 'gendered niche'. This issue will be elaborated further in the later section in this chapter.

Additionally, Rania who was a single female lecturer also shared Riddeen's perspective on women, engineering and the family. She said,

> *"Okay it's only a speculation. Female students are not really keen in engineering. If they are keen enough, they also have other aspiration in life for example to get married. By marrying, they could not really pursue the line effectively. You cannot be a good operational engineer who work on the site and at the same time keep thinking about the cries and (the) needs of your child and family at home. You ask any female engineer now, or maybe you've already found engineers outside who said almost the same thing, right? It is just difficult to be more ambitious when your heart is also divided into something else. I think in between these two, family will come first"*.

From the observation here it seems that gender issues in engineering exist in a very subtle way. A deficit in confidence and family obligations were the main gender factors that penalised women in engineering in the country. However in the UK, there has been an effort to attract more women and retain the existing women to become engineers and scientists [McRae et. al. 1991]. This kind of effort has not yet been in operating in Malaysia.

Getting into Engineering

A few interviewees say that they should not have taken an engineering course in the first place. Ghusni said,

> *"After working for 4 years, I know I want to do interior design. Engineering is just not suitable for me"*.

One might wonder how some engineers like Ghusni, who did not enjoy her work, would be able to endure working in this career. There are some puzzling issues involved here: Why should there be the conflicting situation of choosing engineering, yet in the end not wanting to work as engineers? Why did some female engineers feel that engineering was unsuitable for them?

I traced the biographical experiences of my interviewees, especially those who cited that engineering was not their real ambition in childhood. A few interviewees cited wanting to be a doctor in childhood, but they could not stand studying medicine due to its infamous memorisation study requirement. Others wanted to work as an accountant, teacher or architect but throughout their lives due to factors such as peer influences, their aptitude in Maths and Science, good career prospects and the good image of this field, engineering became their academic choice, and consequently they became engineers in later life. The life experience of Piah described the correlation of all factors in choosing engineering in the university yet subsequently she is not whole-heartedly accepting work as an engineer.

> *"There are many reasons. To be honest, I decided to do engineering due the 'splendid' image engineering carries. When I was in matriculation centre, I had a housemate who was studying engineering. I always observed her, and thought how 'cool' she was doing in engineering. You know, being a girl and all but did engineering, there were not many girls doing chemical engineering. I also wanted to be like them in this 'cool' engineering course. Plus, at the same time engineering was seen to be the best career in the country, which I also still think the same. It is (Engineering) a well sought-after occupational category that people in general associated with its good image and good pay. So for me, engineering was just 'cool'. In the end of our second year at the Matriculation Centre, we have to select the degree to be pursued. So to be seen as 'cool', I put engineering as my first choice. Since I always good in Maths and Science, I have no problem to take engineering. At that time, I never thought whether I really wanted to be an engineer or not. I never really asked myself before. I just wanted to appear to be 'cool'. I think that was the mistake because I was not sure whether I really wanted to be an engineer. In the end I found that I didn't like it, so it was a mistake. Now I tried to console myself saying I received the knowledge, the experience, so not that bad". [* My highlight]*

Despite Piah and Ghusni's personal views, engineering still attracts others. In fact, many regarded becoming engineers as the greatest achievement in life. At least eleven interviewees were contented to study engineering at universities and were later proud to be known as female engineers and work side by side with men. For example, when I asked about her greatest achievement in life, Che-Dania replied,

> *"Engineering was always my ambition since childhood, thus I think it was not so difficult for me study engineering course. I received first class honours, you know. Being the only one at the university (in Britain) and I was the Malay, I felt so proud of myself.*

> *And later, when worked as an engineer at PetCo I promised to really practice my engineering job, I mean all of technical stuff so that I can challenge men's (skills) domination in this area. At the moment I feel **proud** of myself because I was appointed as the team leader to a group of men to handle big projects. I'm happy". [* **My highlight**]*

In relation to the above quotation, does a job position influence how interviewees see engineering, and consequently feel satisfied to be an engineer? The citation from Ely-Fadwah who was a Project Leader might explain this situation clearly. She said,

> *"Well I didn't really like my previous work, too demanding, too much work, too little time. I was just not contented. As a leader now, I can really manage and plan the projects with other colleagues, see the progress of that project and finally be satisfied once that project is completed. This area of engineering is more enjoyable yet at the same time challenging too".*

Evidently, the life situation of each female engineer needs to be scrutinised too. The stark contrasting personal experience of Ghusni and Ely-Fadwah might justify their current career directions. At the time of interview, Ghusni was eight months pregnant suffering a weekend wife syndrome while her transfer application to PetCo Barat was still undecided. On the other hand, Ely-Fadwah was comfortably staying with her husband and two boys, with no obvious either personal or professional problems. In addition, Ghusni was in a stage of establishing herself in an engineering career with not more than 5 years working experience, whereas with more than 10 years working experience in engineering, Ely-Fadwah was now in a comfortable zone. As indicated by Qamra,

> *"I would say studying engineering is tough, but when it comes to work, it's not that tough. You might required a lot of engineering input if you are in R&D but considering at our site now, I don't think I am using even 20 per cent of what I (have) learned. I don't think (the work I'm doing now) really of engineering type, it's more on the daily co-ordinating stuff".*

In brief, this study found that the personal and professional situations of the female engineers seem to influence how they look at their career direction in engineering.

Engineering as a Profession for Women

It is most common to find women who work in particular occupations within industries. Jobs are differentiated by gender, and expressed in the way male and female labour are sold and rewarded. Cockburn [1985a] reported that the same job specification in hospitals and factories generated unequal pay between the two genders The industrial sector itself is commonly divided

between 'feminised' job specification where normally this kind defined as semi-skilled and unskilled [Crompton and Sander Additionally, women are seldom represented in the higher-wage([United Nations. 1995b: White et. al. 1992]. Therefore what is the women in engineering especially when engineering is associat industry dominated by men?

A report by Townsend [2003] showed that engineering in Britain still suffered a bad, out-dated image that does not have a high profile of pristine, sterile microchip companies but more of big, dirty factories belching out smoke, such as British Steel and industries connected to shipbuilding. Moreover, Spencer and Podmore [1987] showed a significant aspect of gender identity in the job choice in which more males chose to study engineering than females. Additionally, Bem [1985] and Newton [1987] suggested that male engineers were more likely than females to see their career choice as representing an important aspect of their gender identity.

Women in the US and UK viewed engineering much more negatively than other scientific careers and have seen the field as extremely 'unfeminine' [Meiksins and Smith. 1993]. Although most interviewees in this study would have the general view that engineering was like any other occupation that accepted the participation of women, at least four of them strongly stated that engineering was not a job for a woman. Ghusni believed that engineering was unsuitable for women because *"it consumed a lot of your time, a lot of your energy and you have to sacrifice a lot"*. Haifa also added,

> *"My opinion? I have a sister. I'm **not** **encouraging** her to take an engineering course. I think computer science or accountancy is more appropriate for women, not engineering. I've already experienced it. Not suitable for women unless if you are willing to **sacrifice**. When you are married you need to **sacrifice** your commitment to your family. But for me, I'm not. It is just too late ehh? (laugh)". [* **My highlight**]*

Even though other jobs require sacrifice too, engineering is said to demand a greater degree of sacrifice from female engineers because of its tough nature. The physically and mentally challenging nature of engineering interrupts the progress of female engineers in the field. Syaza gave her personal view about the appropriateness of engineering for women.

> *"To answer the question, you may think that I'm a hypocrite because I'm by the way an engineer. I would say that it is good to encourage more women in engineering because it is indeed a well-respected occupation, but I would **not encourage** my kids to pursue engineering at all because it is very **tough**. Not only does it require your full physical*

capacity, it also challenges you mentally. It will give you headaches. Take other subjects, just don't pursue in this line". [My highlight]*

Briefly, some female engineers in this study discouraged other women from joining engineering. Engineering seemed unsuitable for women due to its physically demanding role that challenged feminine attributes, a mentally challenging profession that requires a full focus on the job and the difficulties in pursuing a career, due to the limitations of being a woman, particularly during pregnancy and child caring. This study also found some external factors that deter women in engineering such as discrimination in the organisation and the lack of confidence from male colleagues.

Based on these career impediments, an issue can be raised: Why did they choose engineering in the first place? Devine [1992] found the associations of the engineering image, socialisation with the father and individual masculine attributes were among the factors that attracted some women to engineering. Evidently, these were also among the factors that contributed to the phenomenon in this study. Additionally, they chose to be engineers due to the feeling of responsibility towards the family. Since engineering is always associated with success in Malaysia, by becoming engineers, they were hoping that their siblings and other family members would also imitate their successful life path, even though engineering might not be to their liking.

However, some individual negative opinions about engineering might mislead the whole conception of the field. The nature of the engineering department in which female engineers work in PetCo needs to be investigated too as different departments might have different requirements. Ely-Fadwah said,

> *"Actually it depends on the nature of engineering work. If you are in the operations, it is tough and rough. But like we are now in the research department, we do a lot of modelling, designing simulation so I don't think it is rough at all. Or like my previous job that involve manufacturing, yes it is difficult because you have to go inside the big textile oven, you have to fix the dryers, you even have to climb up on the piles of textiles in the warehouse. So in that nature, engineering is rough, tough and difficult for women".*

Due to the differentiation of engineering departments, there were female engineers on the technical ladder, yet they might feel more comfortable in the office rather than on the sites. Widyan held an electrical engineering degree, but she was quite complacent with her current position in the computer department in PetCo. According to her, handling computer systems in the

office much more suited her than working outside in electrical plants. She added that that task befitted her natural tendency towards home and the family.

> *"I like my work now because I can only work from the office. But when I've been called for duty (on sites) deep in my heart I feel unfair to my kids because I have to leave them (at home)".*

Hakim's "demasculinisation of work" [1999] showed the impact of technological change in reducing - even eliminating - the need for physical strength and risk-taking in occupations. Engineering in PetCo was frequently seen to be demasculinised, but interviewees believed that the situation is dependent on each engineering discipline. In comparing the various engineering branches, most interviewees were convinced that one branch of engineering was more suitable for women than another. Mechanical engineering was the least favoured, and thus the least advisable for women to venture in. Most female engineers considered that computer-based engineering was a better choice for women. Widyan said, *"it is a 'soft' engineering line. I am lucky to be in this line because it suits feminine traits. Less rigorous, less commitment thus I have more time at home"*. However, Electrical Engineering was a definite favourite among women.

> *"Any women who are interested in engineering needs to know which engineering branch they want (and are able) to go. I don't advise Mechanical engineering to them but Electrical engineering is okay. To be a good mechanical engineer you have to repair things by yourself. You cannot just leave it to the technicians to fix it. You have to work on that machine by yourself. Mechanical engineering requires them to be mobile. When they are pregnant they can't just be mobile as well as they have to limit themselves from climbing reservoirs' ladders for flame inspection".*
> [Nayli]

In short some female engineers viewed a degree of flexibility in the branches of engineering at PetCo worked to their advantage. Elnoor said,

> *"(To have a degree in) Chemical engineering, (employees) can be given a position as process engineer. If we come from engineering background, we can swap to different (engineering) positions. In most cases, engineers come from different branches.*

There was a slight degree of feminisation of engineering in PetCo to suit the sex-stereotype. The administrative tasks relating to the theoretical technicality of engineering were the frequent job niche assigned to these female engineers. Haifa said,

> *"(Although I am an engineer here) I'm now doing a lot of administrative job because the management thought having an officer with engineering background in the administration may ease some misunderstandings pertaining to technical issues. For example I may decide whether or not certain training courses are suitable to the engineers and technicians. That's one of the obvious reason it is better to have administrators with engineering background".*

This study found that female engineers were channelled towards the feminine niche at work, mainly due to their feminine stereotyping attributes. The presence of "feminised niches" [Crompton and Sanderson. 1990] or "professional niches" [Savage. 1992] conveys the meaning that some occupations are seen as particularly suitable to women. Some jobs are socially constructed as suitable to women and what they are. This suitability depends on the pattern of the domestic labour, as well as the cultural assumptions about femininity [Crompton and Sanderson. 1990]. Further elaboration on feminised engineering is justified subsequently in a later section in this chapter.

The Professional Image of Female Engineers in PetCo

To be treated professionally, female engineers felt that it was important that they presented an appropriate 'image' of a professional. But, for an engineer that image was male.

> *"We have to wear site uniform with safety boots and helmet. It does not mean that engineers cannot wear baju kurung, but if we have to work and maintain the platform, we have to wear trousers".*
> [Farah]

The authority of the dress code was quite powerful in a corporate company like PetCo. Conformity in appearance is important, especially in companies where there is a "corporate culture" [Kanter. 1993]. To blend in, fitting in with the rest would seem necessary to the whole situation. To be different might be seen as provocative, which might halt future career prospects. McDowell [1997] explored the corporate culture in banks in which gender presentation plays a significant factor for recruitment and promotion in the corporate hierarchy. Image, as against intelligence or capability among female workers was essential for their career. The image that the women engineers were trying to project had to reflect femininity and yet be serviceable for the number of different and sometimes dirty tasks that their work entailed.

Working style and the ability to project a certain kind of personality were also crucial. Although women might wear versions of the male suit, they felt that they must not mimic male styles of behaviour, but had to find some ways of

being feminine and demanding respect. Tijan spoke for many of the interviewees who felt that they should project a good image for the benefit of their gender.

> *"Even though we have to work in a men's world and act like how men do their work. But you have to remember that you have to be a woman too. You cannot act yourself as a guy. I mean like being a tomboy. You have to be what you are". [* My highlight]*

The engineers in PetCo learned to obey unspoken rules about their appearance and behaviour to pass as engineers. However, the persona they projected had also to declare their physical femininity, since being a masculine woman would be even more unacceptable to their male colleagues. Spencer and Podmore [1987] reinforced the suggestion that women were not liberally permitted to exercise masculine leadership unless it is considered as 'appropriate' to their gender.

Additionally, presenting a professional image was not only restricted to clothes, but also associated with other physical attributes especially the stature.

> *"As a fresh graduate to work at PetCo is a bit difficult. You suddenly arrived at the site. They especially colleagues and technicians see how small you are physically, (thus) they might judge that you are incapable to do an engineering job". [* My highlight]*
> [Damia]

To project as professional engineers, females must pay attention to their physical appearance and attributes. With the right projection, female engineers might receive better co-operation from others.

Work Diversion to Non-Technical Engineering

Female engineers are highly educated but to what extent are they willing to use and expand their technical skills? What are the conditions, which allow (or disallow) them to pursue the technical ladder?

Female engineers in PetCo started their career in a highly technical line, but at the middle stage in their career, they might have to shift to a non-technical line. Rather than make their way through a hostile engineering environment, they preferred to opt for a non-hostile condition, mainly due to personal reasons. Throughout the discussion, the situation of being married and having a family caused difficulties for women's career advancement. But

Bazla, who was still single, believed that marriage and family should not be a real predicament in advancing one's career. At the same time she also hinted at the effect of a family meddling with one's career.

> *If it is the job requirement to climb a ladder or use a boat, then go for it. But it is typical when a woman chooses to refuse to do these things, complaining about seasickness, phobia. This should never happen because you know your job requirement. You know what the engineering field is all about. It's about the work. The thing is if you feel unable to cope with the job, you should not take engineering (in the first place). But, if you know that you are interested in it, then go ahead. Don't just stop in the middle. But, I do understand the difficulty to merge both areas to be best at both".*

It is a practice of PetCo to give a career option to its engineers, especially after 5 years. The engineers might opt for continuing up the technical ladder or choose the non-technical ladder. However, the technical ladder at PetCo commanded better job opportunities. If an employee has a technical knowledge in-hand, she or he might go further in the company. As Bazla said,

> *"It makes your life in PetCo easier if your basic background is in a technical line".*

Usually site engineers have greater career prospects than the non-site engineers in PetCo. For example, a non-technical job ended at job-grade 23, but it could be further extended to the job-grade 26 on the technical ladder. A better job-grade means a better position in terms of remuneration, promotion and other benefits.

Engineering and the Employment Market for Women in Malaysia

Rais believed that gender aspects in engineering are not as tough these days. The nature of the market has changed, which has also affected engineering. He cited,

> *"Well it would be better to have more female students doing critical engineering projects (papers) rather than concentrating on doing the same old thing, which they think suits their gender. The workforce today is not really thinking or looking at the gender difference, but what is important is to work hand in hand with other engineers regardless man or woman. They (women) should make themselves marketable, show better skills (for instance) by managing a high technology and sophisticated projects. Then if they manage to do that, people will respect and look at (them) highly. Gender is not that persistent (anymore). Confidence and professional success are the main things people (employers) are looking for now".*

His view is still an ideal vision. Even though gender difference is not a deciding point in the Malaysian workforce, it is still relevant to the employment market in this country. In truth, women's subordination has to do not only with male domination but also with the basic economic and political structures of society, as well as women's own choice. These are the

basic mechanisms of exploitation that feed and accentuate gender inequalities in occupations.

McRae et. al. [1991] looked at the issues of women and engineering in terms of employer's policies and practices. They found that the employment market in Britain was less welcoming to women's participation in engineering. Additionally, women engineers accepted that success in their chosen profession would only happen if they appeared committed to their work and responsive to the demands made by it [McRae et. al. 1991]. My study so far has revealed that these female engineers were a special bunch of women who dared to be different from others. Tijan said, *"to work in engineering you have to be both women and men, you are expected to be tough"*, which actually summarised a distinctive work paradigm among female engineers. They needed to ensure that they possessed the characteristics of each gender type in order to continue working in engineering.

However, the problem for women was that being 'tough' conflicts with being 'feminine'. The classic "double-bind"[59] for women working in a male-dominated-oriented profession and the basic incongruity between their personal identity as 'feminine' and their involvement in a profession that was strongly recognised as 'masculine' placed these women in a no-win situation [Spencer and Podmore. 1987]. If they attempted to conform to the dominant male norms of the profession they would be regarded as unnatural women, but if they distanced themselves from the professional norm, men would not accept them as competent professional colleagues. In the end, whatever women actually do and however they behave, they are still left with the persistent problem that is based on a gender contextual perspective.

A woman in Malaysia is expected to be and act like a woman. In this line of work, a female engineer might be harshly criticised if she tried to act otherwise. Trying to be too strong and tough was abhorred. It was not surprising to find that most female engineers used a more common strategy of 'reversal effect'. If they could not be tough in dealing with people, then they should be soft.

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[59] A situation whereby women in leadership position are portrayed as exercising controlling authority onto others, but when they actually do this many men and some women will think the less of them. These women are caught in-between

> *"When dealing with the subordinates (the male technicians), you **have to remember** that you are **a lady** and you are superior (in position) than they are, (thus) you have to be clever to make it work. I work differently from my male colleagues. They can just ask technicians to do this and that. But for me, I called them personally. I instruct one particular task to one person at a time. Treat him like a friend. Sit side by side while clearly explaining to him about the job". [* My highlight]*
> [Tijan]

Rosen [1989] looked at the psychological issue of women and work in relation to achievement among female employees in his sample. He studied the "chameleon syndrome" by which girls' behaviour varied to suit the expectations and anticipation of others. In a few cases, female engineers had to use 'charming feminine assets' just to make sure things were done.

> *"Actually (being) a lady engineer, it is easier to ask them (especially male workers) to work. Use your **charming asset**; be nice, say nice things to them, they will do it (the job). Sometimes it works but not all the time (laugh). You use **your charm** to your benefit. Ask them for favours, nicely. If you keep demanding things to be done, then you end up being hated". [* My highlight]*
> [Damia]

Charming assets might include politely asking the subordinates to do their tasks, smiling a lot, and having a nice personality so that co-workers feel happy to work with her. This means that women employees have to bring their feminine nature into the workforce with them. Trying to change it by being tough will create tension and hatred.

However, female interviewees found that this contradiction sometimes helped them to survive in the men's world. Tijan stated,

> *"I think a place with all guys is less cheerful, less lively. That place needs women's existence too. Women are regarded as 'flowers' to cheer, liven up and create happy atmosphere. In fact most male technicians like to have female engineers and similarly female technicians like to be with male engineers. I think this situation is applicable in all places. **Opposite attraction** in the working environment is good". [* My highlight]*

The rule of 'opposite attraction' in gender might be working for the benefit of female engineers in the workplace. However, based on the above example, female existence was heavily feminised whereby they were seen to motivate a positive atmosphere at the workplace. Women's professional functions in the office were less recognised, yet their 'natural feminine' attributes were applauded.

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situations, where the job demands they abandon feminine characteristics but society also requires them to compromise their femininity.

I found that if they play the 'feminine side' in such situations female engineers have advantages in a male-dominated area at work, and thus 'opposite attraction' applies. Yet at the same time a "double-bind" situation still exists. This study envisages an unpromising situation for women's career prospects in engineering, though, in general, women may have an advantage in the non-technical side of professional practice in engineering [Walesh. 2000]. The process of striving to get accepted in the engineering profession poses numerous paradoxes for women. According to Savage and Witz, female engineers *must behave like men but not be men and behave unlike women and yet be women* [1992; 53].

Recognising the Gendered Issues in Engineering

PetCo was said to have an attractive package for its employees, particularly women. The company was believed to practise a flexible relationship with its female engineers, particularly when it involved family matters. Options were given to them should they decide to be released from technical work and pursue the management ladder. Similarly, female engineers in British petroleum companies are often directed to the management and training divisions [Davidson. 1989: 1984].

Discrimination could also operate indirectly as PetCo's female engineers might be happy with the current condition of giving some of their jobs to their male colleagues and technicians, but they were losing some of their engineering skills, which were required for further career advancement.

Lack of Confidence and Distrust

Davidson [1984] reported that female engineers in British Petroleum had experienced prejudice and discrimination in management as well as among their male colleagues. Similarly, most interviewees in this study confided in me about traces of gender discrimination and prejudice that happened in PetCo. Of the thirty interviewees, nineteen of them cited various levels of gender discrimination at work. This discrimination could appear in a manifest or latent manner. Lacking confidence in the ability of female engineers was the root of discrimination and prejudice at PetCo.

In addition, gender discrimination and prejudice might not only be based on gender, but also age and stature. A young and petite female engineer who was newly appointed would face more discrimination and prejudice than any other group. It appeared that the male supervisors at PetCo interpreted the factors of female sexuality, youth and physical size as less committed, weak and unconfident in work. Elnoor pointed out,

> *"Doubt about my capability is normal especially (as) I am **new** here. Maybe, because I don't have experience. That is why (my) supervisor does not feel confidence with me. I also think as a **woman**, (to receive confidence from others) is little difficult. But don't tell anybody about this". [* My highlight]*
> [Elnoor]

Additionally, not only does the company doubt the capability of its female engineers, the company's clients were also uninterested when female engineers attended to their business ventures and projects. They openly suggested working with the male counter-parts. Kanter [1977] provides a classic account of the "cycle of powerlessness", which entrapped women in a male dominated organisation. Men acquired power through informal male networking, particularly with sponsors, mentors, peers or subordinates. Women thus tended to be in routinised jobs with fewer opportunities.

Astonishingly, female engineers did not blame the inefficiency of the management in handling this discrimination. They took responsibility for what was happening. They looked at the situation of marriage, pregnancy and having children as the matters they have to deal with privately. In fact they justified the situation of *"women's unstable circumstance at work"* as the basis for a company's lack of profit and productivity. Amni-Bayati explained,

> *"Actually the management does not discriminate in that sense but the problem arises when those engineers got married. They have to ask permissions (from the husbands) to go on working in that demanding job line, and even worst when they (get) pregnant. They cannot be active as before. Due to **women's unstable circumstance at work**, the management has to do what it thinks good for the company. I think it is not intentionally done but the management has to do so for the profit and productivity of the company. So the company has to find a stable worker". [* My highlight]*

This study found that both married and single women experienced this scenario. Some interviewees saw themselves as inherently unreliable employees because of their actual and potential family responsibilities. Commitment to PetCo was invariably found among the female employees.

Employees in the UK also show this culture of commitment. To limit staff turnover and enable the company to retain calibre employees, some

companies gave the employees a package of benefits and inducement in the forms of good discounts and a profit sharing scheme [Bradley. 1999], which actually could provide a win-win relationship between employees and employer. Strangely, in PetCo, the so-called 'blind' commitment to the company could be used against them. Since the company might always assume that the family would be women's first priority, it might keep distancing female engineers from the real challenge of engineering, thus consequently disadvantageously removing them from the better positions, which male engineers occupied.

Competency and Competition with Men in a Male-Dominated Profession

From her observation, Bazla believed that female engineers represented a lower ratio than the male. She opined,

> *"I guess in PetCo, if we look at the HR department in the company, definitely there are more women. But from my experience, if you look at the operations section in other sites, there are fewer women. Even at this (particular) site, there exist a very small number of female executives. Matter becomes worst with the less existence of female engineers. We are still very much the minority". [* My highlight]*

Her words on the gender ratio misbalance touched the issue of vertical segregation. Hakim's model [1979] of occupational segregation by sex defines a vertical occupational segregation as existing when one gender was most commonly working in higher-grade occupations while the other was commonly working in lower grade occupation. It is a well-established fact that the entry of women into higher professional occupational levels has not resulted in their equal distribution within these occupations [Crompton et. al. 2001]. Adding to that situation, Devine [1992] believed that female engineers also encounter a horizontal segregation due to the fact that they were more concentrated on the non-technical side of engineering, just I have described in the PetCo case.

The emergence and persistence of vertical and horizontal gender segregation within the professions brought forth a 'feminisation process' whereby a profession has been changed to that feminine stereotype. The classic works of Cockburn [1985a: 1983] and Wacjman [1983] on gender typing of jobs pointed to the sexual divisions of labour in the technologies in which men dominated work and technology by maintaining their power over women. The

actual capacities of female engineers were frequently under-used [Evetts. 1996: 1994].

Most interviewees assumed that gender segregation started with the recruitment process at each PetCo site. According to them, during the process of selection in employing an engineer, the management tested the agreement of a female candidate to work in a high-risk environment as well as their commitment to the job after marriage. Vel commented,

> *"They had asked me whether I was sure to become a petroleum engineer because they had never a lady before. They made it difficult and even threatened me by saying that this is a difficult job that I have to be prepared to go offshore. Then they asked me what happened if I get married, and more complicatedly was when I had children. It was like trying to change my mindset on the job. I think it was a challenge".*

This scenario was indeed a discriminatory treatment of women at work. The Sex Discrimination Act in 1975 in Britain made it unlawful to discriminate against either sex in access to employment, education or training [Halford. et. al. 1997]. Malaysia also has a similar kind of law, yet not many women were aware of their right with regard to employment law. Likewise, most Malaysian women shied away from "rocking the boat". They were more accepting while at the same time they tried to have a positive perspective of any prejudice that happened to them [Noraini. 2001].

As the nature of engineering jobs at that particular site was physically demanding its principle was quite plain that female engineers at technical sites, particularly those dealing with the reservoirs' maintenance, were rarely welcomed. Cael said in her interview,

> *"My qualification is good but because of (my) gender, maybe because they have problems (with female engineers) before, which is probably true. Myself, for example, after receiving much engineering training (including a 9-month training course in Japan), I have requested not to be in the maintenance unit due to my pregnancy".*

Although I could not directly prove the judgmental statement about the outright refusal to accept female engineers at certain PetCo sites, I found that the top managers of the company tended to be prejudiced against female employees. They suggested that female engineers were less committed to work and were more inefficient than the men at the sites. A conversation with a male General Manager at PetCo Timur openly criticised female engineers, who seemed to be less motivated and less focused at work.

The management would prefer to employ men rather than women due to a perceived differentiation in work commitment. Piah compared her work perspective with her male peers.

> *"Most female engineers believed that an engineering line has no direction for women practitioners but men don't say that. My male engineer friends are all spirited, ambitious and so committed in their line of specialisation".*

Women and men were perceived to be unequal in the commitment that they could give to a job. For this reason, some interviewees argued that recruiters were right to favour male candidates.

> *"Women are **less likely** to give priority to work. They usually are concerned with family more. Women are more **doubtful** in making decision, (and) **easily satisfied**. But men are different. Look at my boss now. He seems less content with the current job, maybe because he wants to go further. Men dare to take the risk. That is why men can go further because they are eager to accept more chances". [* My highlight]*
> [Onsun]

The work ethics of women and men as such were different in a certain sense. In fact, female engineers perceived themselves as less confident, doubtful, spiritless and easily satisfied in work. Therefore, they lost many opportunities at PetCo.

Conversely, when female engineers wanted to seize the opportunities that were offered in engineering, they began to suspect that they were not only having to prove their competency, but also having to prove that they were more competent than their male colleagues were. Widyan said, *"the nature of engineering is to have a strong character".* It was not surprising to find that some interviewees would have worked extremely hard under any circumstances. Kaisah recalled her experience at her previous site, in which she was systematically segregated from her male colleagues to do a non-technical task. She treated it with discretion because she considered the issue as extremely sensitive to the company.

> *"You better not reveal this to others, (it is) **dangerous** (sensitive issue). When I worked at PetCo Barat, my boss **segregates** certain works for women, certain works for men. Easy tasks or deskwork are given to women but whichever tasks involve technical, he will give it to men. He **distrusted** women to do the job. In fact he even admitted that he very much preferred men to do the job (the technical task) but working at PetCo Timur is a bit different and I can show to them that women can do it too. Luckily I was still single at that time, so I was able to spend time at the workplace". [* My highlight]*

Gender discrimination at work, in the forms of distrust and a lack of confidence was obvious in that particular situation, but she resolved it by working harder and better than the rest, especially in competing with her

male colleagues and without questioning the structural barriers. She was hoping that the supervisor would see her determination in doing the technical work and thus reward her accordingly.

Working with men in a male environment highlighted the extent of the gender hurdle against one female engineer, even though the males were subordinates to her. It was seen that male technicians at PetCo had a problem in accepting instructions from female engineers, especially the young ones. Damia said,

> *"It's (far) easier to work with the machines (than with the people) especially if we are **young**. It would make things worst if we have male subordinates who happened to have 20 years working experience, working under us. If we asked him to work on something, he will make us wait and say that it is not important, put it back push it back. Then if we asked for it again, he will say to us why we are so pushy. You know that sort of thing. So we have to understand that men have their **ego**, don't like to be under the charge of young lady officer".* [* ***My highlight***]

In the case of working with experienced and senior male technicians, in her first months in the job, Razan faced the difficulty that her instructions were totally ignored by them. She felt sad with this situation and thought that they degraded her ability at work. She put the blame on herself for her failure to *"persuade"* technicians to co-operate. She had to *"buy"* confidence from these male subordinates to co-operate with her. Likewise Damia said,

> *"As we all know about **male-ego**, (in managing technicians) I will not push them too much. Being a lady in a supervisory level, I have to be **extra careful** or otherwise they may snap back. What I usually do is to have a slow talk to them even though I am the leader".* [* ***My highlight***]

An extreme example of male ego in PetCo happened a few years back when a male technician slapped his female engineer's face because she was said to have 'mishandled' their interaction when giving job instructions to him. It was shocking news, which sounded more like office-gossip to me, but Tijan recalled the incident,

> *"I don't really know what was the problem but the slapping incident (a male technician slapped his female supervisor) occurred here. I took this incident as an example that in dealing with men, I need to constantly **tell to myself that I am a lady** and a superior yet all of my subordinates are men, so I have to know how to handle them. Whenever there are jobs to do, I called them personally and talked to them nicely. Treated him as a friend".* [* ***My highlight***]

Male-ego, together with distrust and suspiciousness towards female willingness at work, was often cited as the reason female engineers encountered difficulty in doing their jobs.

Other obstacles in working in a male environment at work mostly affected female engineers at PetCo who were required to visit offshore platforms. The difficulties working in a male-specific workplace were apparent. An unlatched door for a personal cabin or toilet, no specific toilets for female use, climbing a 200-step ladder, doing a Tarzan-jump from a platform to the waiting boat and inspecting reservoirs were among the physical problems and lack of privacy that women engineers have to face at work.

On relating her working experience, Piah was sarcastically mocked by her male colleagues for being unwilling to go inside to check a vessel. She had to do it just to state her point that female engineers had no problem whatsoever in doing that kind of greasy work. But according to her, it was unnecessary for engineers to inspect the petroleum vessel, and if it were needed, the technicians would do that. In fact, those male engineers would think twice about checking inside the vessel as it was smeared with greasy black oil. In another case, Elnoor was sarcastically asked, *"can you really climb (this ladder)?"* by male colleagues and technicians.

Female employees might feel resentment of the prejudice and discrimination they have to face at work, but realising they will get married sooner or later, they just could not be bothered with the situation. Additionally, there was a tendency among others in interview to see the problem as deriving with women themselves. The self-blaming about the ability to work was quite typical because the respondents did not analyse these experiences in terms of patriarchy or gender discrimination, but considered them to be individual. They legitimised the prejudice and discrimination they faced in the workplace, and viewed this situation as *"just something that we had to cope with"* [Xena]. Others stated *"women tend to limit themselves in work (due to pregnancy and morning sickness). Actually these are self-imposed limitations. Even I do this (told the management) I don't want to be on stand-by basis, don't want to be on call. (Actually) I'm the one who imposed on myself. Nobody asked me to do something like that not even my husband"* [Cael]. This study sensed that they justified this discriminative situation as being their fault for not being confident, rather than others being prejudiced against them.

The extent of discrimination in job distribution by gender in PetCo was further widened by the existence of a tendency by male superiors to think

that women were not suitable for a particular job due to their natural traits. As indicated, women workers were entrusted with the administrative work, even though their educational qualifications equalised men's. When I asked why she was given the administrative work while her male co-worker was given technical laboratory work, Onsun said,

> *"There are two chemists here, I and another guy. He holds technical work at our plant but the management side is given to me, maybe because they think this management work is **suitable for women** (that is) **suitable to our nature".** [* My highlight]*

Onsun's reasoning seemed to point out that the company practised discrimination in distributing jobs, whereas female professionals were mostly allocated to administration and males to the technical division. This situation was attuned with Wajcman's finding [1993] that women employees basically populate the service section such as the human resource department, whereas male groups usually occupy the operations department. A specific example here showed that twelve female engineers admitted that sometimes they were treated as the secretaries of the company which required reporting the minutes of the meeting and writing invoices for the company.

Conclusion

Since most jobs created in recent years in Malaysia are in engineering and technical areas, it is essential for the labour force to possess the ability to adapt and adjust to the changing demands of the technological advances in a knowledge-based economy.

This chapter focused on the life and academic background of the female engineers, which showed the stumbling block of making their way into the male dominated engineering field. Carter and Kirkup [1990], who studied the biographical lives of women engineers in the US and Britain believed that women who entered 'masculine fields' have to take with them 'feminine values' whereby they have to face "double-bind" situations. The female engineers in this study have to bring in feminine attributes such as being gentle and putting on a smile in order to get work quality and co-operation with male colleagues and technicians. People still insisted that they act like women [Wyer et. al. 2001]. The significance of cultural difficulties for women to work in engineering outweighed any problems with the work itself. Female engineers reported were not being expected to achieve the same competency as men [Rees. 1992: Newton and Broclesby. 1982].

In this masculine line of work, female engineers might be criticised or mistreated if they tried to act otherwise. It was actually a no-win situation for female engineers. Such a blending situation depended on very careful management, being feminine in terms of appearance, self-presentation, different expectations and motherhood responsibilities, while at the same time they had to present as business-like in terms of competence, commitment and ambitious targets to claim a rightful place in the industry.

There were always potential gender relational crises at the workplace, particularly when women participated in a male-dominated workplace. The gendering issues in engineering overwhelmingly projected cases of gender prejudice and discrimination. It was found that female employees in engineering still encountered difficulty getting their work done. Male-ego, distrust, a lack of confidence, suspiciousness towards their commitment at work and doubt as to their willingness to work barred women from working in a male environment. As a result, there was a great inclination for female employees to pursue career in the administration of the company. As indicated, women's growing numbers in engineering was due to the expanding 'clean' and 'light' sector such as the data processing and office equipment sector [Devine. 1992]. Although the technical line offered better working condition for workers, women seemed to have no other choice but to be in the administrative line, due to family considerations. This 'softy' line was seen as compatible to the biological caring nature as well as granting them sufficient time with the family at home. They were cited as being disinterested in taking on a challenge and carrying responsibility, which the technical line offered.

Evetts [1996] found that promotion in engineering and science careers in organisations necessitated moving from doing the actual engineering and scientific work to managing others to do it. Additionally, Jones et. al. [1993] stated that a majority of female engineers were more trained as a human resource elite in administration rather than as technical labourers. Although in many cases the female engineers chose to be in administration voluntarily (due to family commitments in particular), this scenario had not benefited them. This career route of administrative engineering has posed a problem of

professional identity for female engineers. Following the discussion by Bradley et. al. [2000] of "feminisation of work", this phenomenon could be regarded as a 'feminisation of engineering work', whereby the very nature of engineering jobs, tasks and skills were changed in ways to make them more suitable for women and to befit feminine traits and domestic responsibilities.

The persistence of women's identification with domestic work reflected the construction of feminine and masculine identity at the workplace. Crompton and Harris [1999b] argued that women's and men's socialisation incorporates a gendered attribution of task responsibilities, which is virtually impossible to change, even in a context in which women's market work is on the increase. The clash of 'masculine' engineering with feminine traits is complicated to resolve. The number of female engineers may be on the rise, but they are not gaining knowledge of the internal structure and processes of engineering. They are seen as being more suited to administrative engineering.

This chapter has investigated the critical aspects of women in engineering, starting with their student life and up to the point where they enter an engineering environment. The next chapter extends the discussion on the experiences of employed women at home.

Introduction

I chose to examine female workers' lives under the categories 'public' and 'private' not because of the natural categories where women belong naturally to the private world where reproduction occurs and men naturally to the public world where production occurs. I decided to use these terms because they are useful analytical categories. They are effective terms to categorise activities that are done by females and males. An activity when performed by men is often more highly valued than when performed by women [Pahl. 1984: Pearson. 2000].

This chapter continues to analyse the experience of female workers but specifically the issues in their private lives. In many places the discussion deliberately focuses on the importance of married women. It is not the intention of this study to exclude single women because in some instances their views are very relevant, but it is the married women who are greatly affected by the more private aspects of life, which are depicted in this study.

Among the questions that need further elaboration here are, do employed women have a second shift at home? How do they feel when at home and at work? In answering these questions, this chapter demonstrates the attitudes of employed women towards the family, especially the challenge of the dual-role concept. In this case, this study wishes to investigate how these women balance the need to be in the labour force while still carrying out their role at home. It has been demonstrated that throughout the years most married women who have a career and earn wages feel that the dual-role contradiction was indeed an unresolved dilemma [Barker and Allen. 1976: Kauppinen and Gordon. 1997].

Following this, the chapter focuses on the measures developed by employed women in setting the boundary between home and the workplace. This particular situation is clearer among the married participants than the single ones, due to their obvious dual-commitment experience. This chapter later extends the discussion on the emotions experienced by women in both situations. Most importantly, this chapter examines the support of the

husbands at home as well as towards their wives' career. This issue closely links the phenomena of having help at home because husbands in general encourage wives to work for an obvious financial reason, yet at the same time women are reminded of their obligation towards children and home.

Attitudes towards Marriage and Family

On many occasions throughout this study the participants could not distinguish between marriage and family. It became more complex when the subject of children was included. It appeared that all the three factors were interchangeably used when they discussed their private life. Additionally, their marital status had not really produced a different perspective in looking at marriage and family. The married ones had experienced the situation, whereas the single ones had anticipated this situation would happen. Basically, everybody agreed that they have to balance their time at the workplace and at home, but the latter was more important than the former.

A typical working trend of female employees depended on their marital status. Single respondents might have a different outlook on work from the married group. A strong commitment to work might be more apparent when the employees are single but once they got married, the commitment later drifted away to the family and home. This work pattern was regarded as normal among women workers in this study regardless of their marital status. Bazla, who was still single, represented the voice of others.

> *"It's normal for the women, once they got married and especially when they have children, they put their focus more on the children and family, and not to work anymore". [* My highlight]*

This work pattern is based in the cultural assumption of the society. Marriage is seen as normal and is expected in Malaysia [Jamilah. 2001], as is having a family [Hing et. al. 1984]. The demographic data gained from this study showed that 169 of the Malay respondents were married, 64 were single, ten of them betrothed, only two were divorced, another two were widowed and one admitted that she was separated. Among the interviewees twenty were married and ten were single.

Women in general regardless of marital status did see their life direction as centred on home and the family, and associated themselves with domestic the life. For example, all married interviewees, including three single ones,

clearly wished to have a closer attachment to their children and family at home rather than to be working at the workplace. Haifa said,

> *"Work is important to me **but family comes first**. I'm not a career woman (laugh)".* [* **My highlight**]

It is a catch-22 situation here. Most participants, both in the questionnaires and interviews, could not accept the situation of being full time homemakers devoting their lives just to the family. Because according to them, having a 'job' as full time house managers narrowed their minds. They did not feel the need to have academic qualifications if that was the option in their lives.

> *"I don't want to stay at home and be a full time housewife because I feel that I will waste my times, studying for so long. Being at home and only doing housework does not need to study at all. You just know how to do it naturally. I saw my mum works non-stop, 24 hours just doing housework only. But unlike office, you have 8:00am to 5:00pm daily. Housework is continuous. I think if we only do housework, our mind will be narrowed".*
> [Razan]

Therefore, they wanted to work. However, their work orientation started to change when marriage occurred. Crompton and Harris [1998a: 1998b] explained the behavioural differences among professional women that relied on the family life cycle. They found that employment structures were the outcome of both choice and constraint, which women had at home. Likewise, in this study, during the early stages of their career while they were establishing themselves, the interviewees accepted changing their lifestyle to progress in their career. Later, they sometimes reached a plateau of satisfaction with work and their personal lives. Kaisah proclaimed,

> *"When I was just accepted to work here, I was so dedicated to work. I would be so upset if I knew my supervisors tried to segregate tasks based on gender. I did not like to do deskwork. You don't have to be engineers to do deskwork. But my working perspective changed gradually after I got married. When I was still single I could spend a lot of my time in the office but not anymore. I just wanted to be home as soon as possible"*

However, with their limitation of being at home all the time, they managed to look on the positive side when they were at home with their children. In comparing the working mother and the non-working mother, Cael observed that better quality time with children was more manifested among the working mothers.

> *"A working mother can give more **quality time** than a full-time mother. I observed my non-working neighbour, the tendency to get angry towards the children is high. I don't say that I have spoilt my daughter. But I thought whatever she did was very funny. I enjoyed myself".* [* **My highlight**]

Evidently, employed women, regardless of marital status, experienced a dilemma between the public and the private life. The British working mothers also faced such dilemma [Brannen and Moss. 1991]. Therefore, it is appropriate for this study to look into the measures that employed women implement when combining home and the workplace.

Setting up the Boundaries between Home and the Workplace

A problem that women have to come to terms with, especially if they are married and have children is to fulfil their professional demands as well as the practical and emotional demands of being a mother and a wife. In their study on professional women working in a male dominated area, Spencer and Podmore [1987] viewed professions as 'greedy' because they demand an overriding commitment from the members. According to McRae et. al. [1991], women engineers accepted that success in their chosen profession would only happen if they appeared committed to their work and responsive to the demands made by it.

A similar finding was also found among a majority of female engineers in this study. They could not commit themselves to working wholeheartedly, particularly when they had a family to take care of. Twelve married interviewees with children in this study admitted that they have to sacrifice home due to work. There was no option, according to them. To be committed to career, married women had to sacrifice their family life. Yet not many were willing to do so. Imani said,

> *"Actually it's a reality, being a (working) woman you have to **sacrifice** one (aspect to the other). If you want to go for your career you have to **sacrifice** your children, your house, your responsibility as a wife. It can **never be in balance**. (There are) many examples when women are successful in career but they have problem with children at home. I don't believe when a working woman said that she is successful at home, successful in career, also successful in social life. For me, it will not happen like that. Honestly, if I don't have family I will be better than this (presently she is a Senior Manager). I can go internationally because there are a lot of opportunities. I assume if I don't think about my husband and children I shall be better than this, (better than) today". [* My highlight]*

The idea of balancing the task, and time between home and work was only a myth according to them. Hochschild [1997] found that the workplace takes most employees' time for both parents and non-parents alike. Additionally, in this study, eight of the married interviewees would like to have the ability and opportunity to have a balance between both, but they have to acknowledge that this was unreal.

*"I would say **ideally** we should balance our life at work and home. We must know our roles in both places. But in reality, it is not easy to compartmentalise them. We might say that we should never bring office frustration to home, but somehow **it is difficult to do**. In the end, our family might still have to bear our disappointment. **It is just difficult**. But, **ideally** we should try to achieve the balance of both". [* My highlight]*
[Damia]

A majority of career parents felt it a burden to manage the multiple roles simultaneously [Verbrugge. 1987].

A profession in engineering means a job that is task oriented rather than time oriented. Therefore, there were great pressures for them to stay late or take work home. Women working for a company where profits depend on completing jobs promptly were under the most pressure because it may exercise an amount of control over the hours [Firth-Cozens and West. 1991]. Piah said,

"There was a day I had to work under a great pressure to complete an important company's project. I had to submit the design the next morning but I still need to do few changes in some areas but at that time it was already 8:00 at night, I think. But technical problem occurred and messed up all of the computer programmes. I panicked and my mind just went blank. My hands were trembling while amending the mess but it was not my luck at all. I was unable to retrieve the lost file on time especially in that panicky situation. The blame was put on me. That was the worst experience so far with the company. Hope it won't happen again".

Time shortage at work became more crucial when there was also a shortage of time at home. Vel observed,

*"I **don't have enough time** in both places. I have 3 children at home; it's a lot to do. They need a lot of my attention but I also have a lot of work to do at the office. So I think I faced a **shortage of time at both** (places)". [* My highlight]*

This kind of pressure becomes extremely burdensome if the same women have a responsibility for young children. They would feel guilty about leaving their children behind for work assignments.

*"To be on call and outstation was the worst for me and family. I felt very **guilty** if I had to leave them at home for at night or a couple of days for work. To think that again, you've been working for 8-9 hours already at the workplace plus travelling time too, at the end you can only see your children for probably 3 hours only at night before they go to sleep. Even within that 3 hours, you need to share with their other evening activities especially tuition and Quranic recitation class outside home. So basically I have only 1 and half-hour to see them everyday. I don't like that but what to do". [* My highlight]*
[Ely-Fadwah]

On the contrary, family demands could help interviewees to resist becoming completely submerged in work, which was something they did not want to do. Uzma explained,

"After having a family of my own now I manage to distribute time positively. I mean I know where and when to stop at work because I know that my husband is waiting for me at home. It was different when I was single. I won't call it a day, not until I finished my job, which actually would never do. But now, I know I should stop. I know I have to go home". [* My highlight]

Therefore, there is a practical reason for setting up boundaries between professional life and personal life. This space boundary served to identify which set of priorities was primary at any time. They had not only restricted the demands of work but they also had to restrict the demands of home. There were contradictions in wanting to be seen as a good homemaker and a good worker. Boundaries were set up to allow the different aspects of life to coexist with the least amount of conflict. Women engineers erected and maintained boundaries between these two parts of their lives in different ways. One common strategy was to reject the demands of the job after a certain time of day, and optimise the time spent at work.

"For me, time management is important. If you can manage your time properly then you can do your job well regardless at home or office. I set the time limit for both places. At work I try to complete my tasks as many as I can, on time. The longest I can spend at work is till 6:30pm. That's it. Then I rushed home to be with the family. I will not bring my unfinished work with me. It's not fair to my children. At home I pay attention to them, totally". [* My highlight]
[Yamni]

Additionally, they also reduced the pressure of work by taking less responsibility and fewer important assignments. Ghadat-Hidni said,

"In my line of work, I have to manage, formulate and test the bitumen, which is actually the end product of petrochemical processes. I like my job now, very less demanding with fewer responsibilities because there are not much diversified products to do with it. Sometimes I hardly have any project. This works very well to me because it means I can spend more time at home with my baby and husband". [* My highlight]

This boundary issue was related more to the married interviewees due to the apparent requirement to separate their time at the workplace and home. They implemented certain measures in ensuring that the time was properly managed.

Bringing Office Works to Home

This study considers that female engineers were more interested in the family life rather than working life. In practising quality time with the family, the respondents were disinclined to bring their work home. But if they had to, they made sure that attention was given to the family first. Ely-Fadwah said she had to complete the tasks at home but only after her children had slept.

"It's not fair to my children seeing me working while they really want to play with me. So I would only start to work after they slept, till say 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning".

This scenario was not exclusive to the married respondents. Bazla, who was still single, also believed that there should be a boundary between the workplace and home. She tried not to bring any office work home.

"I rarely bring work at home. For me, work is work and home is home. If possible, it is not fair to say 8:00am to 5:00pm because sometimes it exceeds to 6:00pm or 6:30pm, but that's it. I'll leave that work and go home without bringing it with me. You have to know the difference. If you bring work at home, it means you bring problem with you, you carry work stress with you".

My interviewees were observably less interested in bringing their office works home. The quantitative data demonstrated that 62 per cent of the respondents would never take their office work home. As respondent 16 said, *"I would never bring my office works home. If I do, when would be the time for me to spend with my small kids? I have enough problems at work. I don't want to bring those problems inside my home. And my husband does not like it, actually".* Bringing office work home means stealing time from the family.

The Feeling at the Workplace and Home

Do employed women perceive the relations between work and family life in unilateral terms as continuous and integrated or discontinuous and conflicting? It was very interesting to find that some participants had the impression that home, which supposedly should feel calm and peaceful, seemed to be more difficult than the workplace. Piah commented,

"I think I can't really stay at home. It is okay for a couple of days, but I think I develop headache on the third day at home (laugh). I do not know what else to do because I'm so used of doing something at work. Once I imagine bringing pillow and mattress to work, so while resting I still can work. If I ever imagine that to happen, maybe it means that the workplace is not that bad after all. It's actually very practical rather than go and then come back again to the office (laugh)".

Thirty-four per cent of the respondents felt that the workplace was a better place than home. In order to ensure their answer, another subsequent question with the same meaning but which has been reconstructed in a different way was put to them. This time the respondents were asked whether the workplace felt just like a peaceful home. Forty-five per cent agreed that the workplace appeared to create a peaceful environment and not a chaotic one.

The statement *"working places a lot of emotional stress on women"* was best analysed with a case whereby a child or dependent existed in the family. Studies from

the 1960s until the 1990s illustrated the fact that children were frequently blamed for the emotional stress experienced by the mother [Barker and Allen. 1976: Beneria and Stimpson. 1987: Drew et. al. 1998: Kauppinen and Gordon. 1997: Myrdal and Klein. 1968]. Nearly 34 per cent of respondents who have had children accepted that work has stressed them. On the other hand, Hochschild [1997] has a different view on this matter. She believed that women were more likely to feel depressed at home than to feel stress in the workplace. Her main point is about working women being appreciated at work due to having status. The ideal of home with its never-ending tasks has created the idea that the workplace is not a chaotic place, as some people would think. In fact, some interviewees shared the same feeling. Vel added,

> *"Actually I had the experience being a full time housewife. At one time I took a year off from work to follow my husband to Japan before we went to Houston. I tell you, I don't want to do it again. I think being a full time housewife is **the most unappreciated job**. It is a hard work; you wake up in the morning you have to start doing household tasks till late night. I think it is a 24 hours occupation, which you didn't get paid and people didn't really recognise it. It's **depressing**. I don't think I want to be a full time housewife again (laugh)". [* **My highlight**]*

At this point, I found that the interviewees were trying to balance the work at the workplace and home. Although in many cases, they said that their family and home come first, they also claimed that being full-time housewives were unappealing. They would like to continue working.

When this study analysed the marital status, 41 per cent of the married and 30 per cent of the single respondents disagreed that the workplace gave them emotional stress. The reason for their disagreement should be the focus of this study. Did they simply enjoy their work, or did they not experience a childcare problem or pressure at home, which reduced the emotional stress they might feel at work?

Apparently single respondents have no real obligation at home, thus they were more likely to feel the enjoyment at work. The married working respondents might feel enjoyment at work due to the fact that most of them have a house helper to assist them at home. Paying assistance in domestic life is indispensable to many participants in this study. The home help could lessen the domestic burden. Imani said,

> *"Actually I enjoy (working). Since I have a house helper, I don't have to take care of those simple domestic things. My house helper does all (domestic works except cooking). This is important because I have more quality time with my children. That is why it is important to have a house helper. If not I cannot be a career woman, right?"*

It was also found that as much as 40 per cent of the respondents felt positive towards the working place. Firth-Cozens and West [1991] examined the working situation that predominantly had a psychological effect on the female employees. They found that a feeling of satisfaction might occur once these female employees had managed to complete their job. According to Le Feuvre [1999], this psychological satisfaction was more apparent among professional people because their job specifications are usually skilful and mind challenging. In addition, research conducted by Horton [1996] claimed that married working women tended to experience self-respect in the labour force due to their independent status.

However, respondent 250, who was a divorcee wrote, *"it is equally interesting life for me now but life at home was not that interesting when I was still married"*. This respondent clearly pointed out that the factor of being married was actually a hindrance for her in enjoying life and not due to the existence of the children. Once her marriage had been dissolved, she was able to channel her interest in life, whether it was directed towards the home or the workplace.

An important comparison of that issue can be deduced from the age range of the respondents. Of those who said that life at work was more interesting, 30 per cent of them were in the age range of 21 to 25 and then closely followed by the age range 26 to 30 (25 per cent). It suddenly dropped to 11 per cent by the age range 31 to 35, which is a child-rearing age for most working mothers. The age difference played an important role here because it appeared that the younger group was more likely to see life as interesting at work rather than the older group. As women get older they tend to like to be at home more than the younger group [Devine. 1997], especially they were more likely to have children, and therefore had a family-focus attitude.

Another way to explain this scenario was probably due to the different expectations that young people have when looking at life. Their views on the workplace might derive from the lack of social enjoyment they had at home. In the workplace, they have friends and colleagues who shared their hobbies and interests. At home, they might be unable to share common things with their children and husbands, and need to consider familial interests more than personal needs.

However, they tended to feel rewarded in fulfilling their home obligations. Nayli said,

> *"My officemates and I liked to go shopping together, we enjoyed eating out together but they were rare occasions. I believed my spare time need to be spent for my family. When I was single, I liked to read a lot, liked pampering myself while listening to the radio, but immediately after the marriage, I automatically **have to** switch my interests to cooking and even gardening after I got my child because she likes to walk in the garden. So I **have to** abandon my personal interests and change them to the interests of the family. Still I'm happy to do that because I feel that my hard work at home is rewarded especially when I see the smiling face of my child walking in the garden".* **[*My highlight]**

Even though Nayli felt rewarded at home, this study also sensed how she has to compel herself to do the housework. The terms she used *"I automatically have to switch my interests (-) So I have to abandon my personal interests and change them to the interests of the family"* showed her real personal feeling was shelved for the benefit of others in the family. The reward that she felt was actually derived from her obligation to the family.

In a more general case, 79 per cent of the married respondents did not feel that working was more rewarding than having their family life. According to them, managing the family and home were the paramount aims in their lives. Respondents 80 said, *"If we are married, we tend to think of the family more than working. For me, I would not hesitate to stop working if there is an emergency like my children falling ill, after all my happiness is to be with my family".* Although I sensed that her response was towards socially acceptable statements, the feeling of contentment from being with her family might be a sign that a life at home was more gratifying than a life in the workplace. The work of Rosaldo and Lamphere [1974] was one of the pioneering studies to find that most women always commit themselves to domestic life.

The Encouragement of Others in Work and Career

Many of the female interviewees' partners in this study were engineers. Of the twenty married interviewees, twelve of them were married to the engineers. And of the unmarried, five of them were betrothed or had special male friends with an engineering background. All of them cited their convenient situation in the relationship because they shared many common interests and could discuss each other's work easily. Husbands and partners gave full support to their work, by providing professional advice and suggestions for any problems at work. One positive comment from Tijan, who

was still single, should be considered an interesting point, because she believed female engineers should marry early so that husbands could guide them in the engineering industry, which was considered a man's world.

> *"Working in this line is different and difficult. You need a male partner. Being a lady engineer is tough (thus) you need a partner with whom you can share your working life. He is a man so he knows what other men's thinking. At least he can give some opinions and advice. I think we should marry early so that our husbands can guide us in handling the men's world".*

She really felt that masculine work ethics and environments were more difficult than women's. It is therefore important to enlist men's guidance at work.

Seventeen interviewees said they had received full support from husbands in their career. In fact, they also believed that their husbands have positively made use of the fact that they are married to female engineers and professionals. Not only was financial source available, but husbands also took advantage of their wives' careers and professionalism. It was a reciprocated relationship. Ghusni cited,

> *"My husband prefers for me to work because he likes a woman to feel confident in life. He wants an open-minded woman, who seems to appear very active and who is not too dependent on him. Thus he wants to have an educated wife, not only to challenge, discuss and share our work life together, but also he thinks that the money I bring home is good for our family".*

The wind of change for equal footing between women and men in Malaysia is starting to be felt. It seems that some husbands had expectations of their wives' career. However, if the husband's occupational status was less than the wife's, there is also a psychological price to pay. Che-Dania, who married a non-professional husband said,

> *"Sometimes when the children came to me complaining about their father's unsuccessful effort to help them in Maths, I tell them that their father was tired that's why he couldn't answer them. I don't want to drop his face in front of the children".*

In a society where the norm of a marital partnership is for the male to have higher status in terms of career, success and income [Wazir-Jahan. 1998], a man married to a brilliant successful professional wife could have his own success completely overshadowed. There is a price in terms of losing the traditional role as the head of the family who is supposedly superior in every sense to the wife. This was more the case for the husbands with a traditional upbringing, who themselves were socialised into the conventional roles of

breadwinner and head of the family. More detail on this issue is available in Chapter Nine.

Most husbands were reluctant to let wives be immersed with work. Apart from spending normal working hours at the workplace, most husbands hesitated to let their wives have extra time outside the home. I asked the women whether or not they were expected to participate in a social life or withdraw from any social activities after marriage. Alya said,

> *"Quite true, my husband imposed certain restriction. I (still) continue in sport. I play volleyball for the company, but only at nearby places. I was invited to go places (for volleyball) but my husband did not allow (laugh). He only encouraged me to work from 8:00am to 5:00pm. If I have to go places, he will start complaining, who is going to take care of the children?"*

A positive statement about work was asked in the questionnaires, but interestingly to find that the respondents responded negatively. Only 34 per cent of them agreed that working could promote an equal relationship with their husbands. I could not at this point ascertain whether the respondents wanted to be seen as equal to their husbands or whether they just simply accepted the inequality that they experienced. Suffice to say that their traditional view on their roles at home has trapped them into the current unfair domestic situation.

> *"I have changed since I'm married. My principle at work was altered according to my family need. Whatever office task I will try to settle it here, I don't want to bring it home. I can't spend lots of time at the office with friends and colleagues outside working hours. Even though I have lots of work at the workplace, I will spend my time at home with my baby and husband. That's my promise to myself".*
> [Nayli]

In so far as it was found that career women became involved in their private life, they became more dependent on a limited range of people close to them, and most importantly on their husbands.

Conversely, this study can also claim a different picture in relation to gender relations at home. Husbands and children are not only a cause of more work for women, but they can also be a primary source of pleasure. It was not surprising to find interviewees speaking in glowing terms about their relationship with their husbands and children. Women realised that the survival of a personal relationship would come under pressure if two careers and children came into conflict [Arber. 1993a: Westwood. 1984]. Thus they were conscious of the need for support given by their partners [Brannen.

1992: Brannen and Moss. 1988]. As working couples, they established contracts between themselves to deal with practical day-to-day tasks and priorities over career development. Their interdependence was a helping strategy between partners in coping with the stresses of two careers. How did the men in this study support their partners? The least they did was to adopt a 'laissez-faire' attitude of non-interference so that the women felt free of the pressure to work, but specifically here, interviewees were reminded that the family should come first. Miza illustrated,

> *"My husband said to me, you work if you want to and I won't meddle with your work but whatever it is, **the priority shall go to the family**". [* My highlight]*

Similarly, Alya also admitted an unequal distribution of familial responsibility with her husband. Her husband was able to focus on his work fully knowing that his wife was around to take care of the children and home.

> *"He hmmmm encouraged me to work from 8:00am to 5:00pm only. If I want to go for training courses or having overtime, he starts to voice up his disagreement. He starts to ask who will take care of the children? But he on the other hand **really likes his work. He dedicated to his work**. Usually he leaves home early and comes back late at night. Maybe that's why he needs me around the house more, to take care of the house while he's away at work. In fact if our helper was ill, I had to take leave to look after the children. He would never do that. **His work comes first** (laugh)". [* My highlight]*

I would assert that the experience of the lack of a husband's commitment in the household was a form of patriarchy in Malaysia. The traditional attitude of some husbands, who still believed in the concept of the male breadwinner, was actually unable to accept the fact that their wife also brought money and provided household necessities for the family. This was the root of the problem. According to Crompton [1999], in a dual breadwinner situation, both parties have rights and duties to the household. However, in this study, the husbands acknowledged the money brought by the wives, but they were blind about the need to change their attitude to adapt to the new situation.

Dependents, Children and Childcare

Before discussing this issue further, this study needs to clarify the reference of 'dependent' used by the respondents. Although the main dependents of this study are the children, another group includes the elderly members of the family, such as the respondents' parents or in-laws, grandparents and even their siblings, especially those who were still at school or at other educational centres. Most respondents would take care of the elderly

members in their home with the help of other family members and probably the house helper. Sending elderly members away to a nursing home is not a norm for the Malays, because that action is regarded as disgraceful.

The Ministry of the National Unity and Human Development recently reported that the existing nine old folks' homes in Malaysia were rarely fully occupied [Malaysia. 2002]. However, the Ministry was planning to build eleven old folks' homes on a day-basis in the country, whereby children can accommodate their elderly members at night. This could benefit the carer, especially those who are working and have other commitments preventing them from providing 24-hour attention for their elderly family members.

Of the respondents who have children, almost 19 per cent of them have three children in the family, followed by 16 per cent who have two children. Only 8 per cent of them have four children and 4 per cent of the respondents have five children. Almost 2 per cent of the respondents in this study have six children and dependents to be taken care of at any time. See Chart 9.

Chart 9: The Percentage of the Respondents' Number of Children
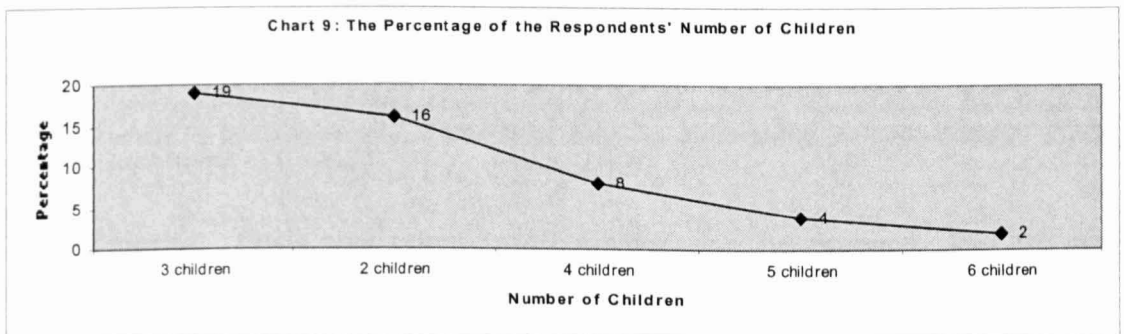
In addition, the age of children in the interviewees' family from infancy to primary school age.

To have young family members in a family, interviewees have to make sure that they still have the energy for their children after a day's work. They played with them, took them out and watched television at night together. These were the activities, which they found pleasurable and even refreshing. Brannen and Moss [1991] also found that after maternity leave the British working mothers were cited to delay working for the sake of their children. Many respondents believed in having better quality time for their children. Cael illustrated,

> *"Since I don't have time much to spend with my child, I really make use of the time I have at home especially in the evening and night. It's all about having a **quality time** with them. I found that whatever she does gives me pleasure, an enjoyment. Everything she does is something exciting to me. But she sleeps quite early. By 9:30pm she already felt asleep. I don't have enough time with her".* **[* My highlight]**

Despite the number of hours they spend away from their children, these female engineers compensated for that time by engaging in activities that the non-working mothers did, especially at evenings and weekends. They believed the quality of the time spent with children mattered rather than the quantity. However, the combination of commitment to a career and commitment to family and home could leave a woman with no time for herself. Alya elaborated,

> *"The mother supposedly should stay at home and take care of the children. A working mother has to **sacrifice herself** a lot with regards to family. But since there are many working mothers now, I feel a bit comforted. As a working mother, I have to use the time left to me for my children. I think I have a **better quality** time with my children. But the only problem is that **I don't have time to myself**. Any time that is left to me is used for my children and husband. **No time for me (laugh)".*** **[* My highlight]**

Alya's lament for herself is another form of personal deprivation for the cause of others. In fact, having her individualised times and space without any interference were most welcomed. Onsun commented,

> *"Since I'm pregnant now I can't join my husband to go back home to see his parents, which we usually do every month. So to be able to be home alone is something I'm looking forward too. I think at certain times, I still need my sweet time **to be alone**. So when he goes home to J, **I use that time to do nothing**, actually (laugh)".* **[* My highlight]**

When marital status was taken into consideration, it appeared that 90 per cent of the married respondents admitted that they felt physically tired when playing with their children at home. In a rare case, respondent 102, who was still single, wrote *"Although I am single, I also feel tired to play with my (younger) brothers and sisters".* Her response might suggest that working wore people out easily regardless of marital status. However, if women were married, fatigue would be intensified with the domestic and family routines at home.

It is believed that the longer employees work for the company, the more job responsibilities they have to carry, and so this greatly affected family life. When seniority was taken into consideration, it appeared that 59 per cent of employees who had already served the company for more than 6 years admitted that they felt tired at home.

Furthermore, the job position in the company also played a determining factor that affected the quality time they spent with their children. Of the respondents, 64 per cent of the higher job grade and only 36 per cent of the lower job grade admitted feeling tired when playing with their children at home.

The physical lethargy among female employees at work could affect their emotional strength once they were at home. As a result, they did not feel energetic enough to manage the household and children. Haifa shared her stressful feeling at home after a whole day at work.

> *"I have to substitute my co-workers job (who has been transferred) since 8 months ago. (It is) so **stressful** because I have to do double work. At the same time, my eldest child has asthma, which quite frequently occurred. It is **worrisome**. And I have no maids. I have to really balance my time. I just cannot afford to work extra hours. The latest is 5:30pm. Not more than that. It is so **stressful** and I am so **exhausted** both at work and home. I feel **guilty** to my children because I always come back home tired while they want me to be with them, play with them". [* My highlight]*

It was the presence of children that made career progression more difficult for female employees but they also felt it was necessary to give full commitment to their children. Not being really able to concentrate on the children's growing up process certainly affected the emotional state of the working mothers [Marks and Houston. 2002].

> *"Right now I am not that interested to work because sometimes I could not bear to leave my kids anymore (especially) when they cried. It's kind of difficult to go to work in the morning. I've got two kids the eldest is 8 years old, already at school. But they still need their mother's attention. Once in a while my kids throw tantrums, they cried when I was about to go to the office. That was actually the time I really wanted to quit working".*
> [Alya]

Additionally, most working mothers were reluctant to be out of their children's sight. They felt much more comfortable being at home. Even though they might be tired at work, just looking at their children's faces made them feel loving. Haifa told me,

> *"I will definitely **feel stress** when I arrive home and being so tired to hearing my children screaming and crying, but it is so strange because at the same time when they are not in my sight even only for a day I already **missed them**. That is why at 5:00pm on the dot, I will be rushing home to see them. I feel **guilty** to spend more time at work while abandoning them at home". [* My highlight]*

The employed mothers felt guilty if distancing themselves from their children. Almost 62 per cent of the respondents admitted that they felt guilty for not being able to spend enough time with their husband and children at home. Of those who said they felt guilty, 33 per cent of them considered themselves

as workaholics. When the rating at the workplace was taken into account, nearly 12 per cent of those who felt guilty rated themselves as excellent and almost 62 per cent said they were good at work. It is easier to understand that the female employees who regarded themselves as workaholics and efficient workers at work more frequently felt guilty for not spending enough time at home.

Even so, a very ironic finding came out from those respondents who felt guilty about not spending enough time with the family. Eighty-five per cent of them voiced their wish to continue working, whereas only 15 per cent of them expressed it differently. It seems that the feeling of guilt about home would not deter them from committing to their career. Their contradictory feeling of choosing to work while combining responsibility at home outweighs the costs.

Most respondents (83 per cent) rejected the statement *"working which is done by the working mothers has a bad influence on their children"*. Of those who agreed, only less than 5 per cent of the married respondents believed that working badly influenced their children. Although they were only the minority, their attitude was definitely skewed towards the conventional value that a good mother must be with her children at all times [Noraini. 2001]. Recently, the Government urged people to have a bigger family and working mothers were reminded that quality time at home should be properly maintained [Jamilah. 2001]. To know these voices came from the Government might be a little upsetting because it suggested that family life solely depended on women's shoulders.

When the family increased, extra domestic help was desperately required. In that case, most female employees would employ a house helper. Apart from an obvious necessity for extra hands in the household, what are the issues behind hiring the house helpers? Who is paying for these house helpers?

House Helper[60]

Globalisation has its female underside to women in rich countries, particularly the US and the UK. Often those who have succeeded in a tough male world find career success only by turning over the care of their children, elderly parents and the home management to women from developing countries [Ehrenreich and Hochschild. 2003]. A similar circumstance is also happening in Malaysia. Professional women in the country tend to hire Indonesian, Filipino and Thai house helpers in their home [Malaysia. 2002]. The job specifications of the full time in-house domestic help in a Malaysian household generally include almost everything ranging from cleaning, child caring and sometimes cooking. In contrast, the home helps in the US and UK usually assist the employer in managing the house keeping while child caring responsibilities are left to professional child minders [Gilligan et. al. 2002: Morgan. 1996].

Many of the interviewees mentioned their guilt for their inability to do the housework. They reflected the "superwoman syndrome", which is experienced by women who attempt to excel at both the traditional female sex roles and the role of paid labourers [Friedan. 1981]. However, the male attitudes revealed a much less positive inclination to change their traditional domestic roles [Newell. 1993]. Because it was the women who felt guilty, it was they who usually saw the necessity of having outside help and thus they had to organise it. Additionally, when domestic help was employed, it may be the case that she took over the husband's responsibilities rather than the wife's.

Since they were unable to do childcare all the time, female interviewees have to arrange that other people do it. Seven interviewees hired a house helper to help them manage the household. Four of them sent their children to a nursery, and they themselves felt responsible for taking and fetching children from it. A few of them turned to a childminder in the neighbourhood, who they trusted[61].

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[60] The Immigration Department estimates that there are over 2 million foreign workers in Malaysia of which there are 160,000 foreign workers hired as the domestic help. However, these figures do not consider illegal foreign workers [Malaysia. 2002].
[61] Even though a strong networking with the family of origin is firmly established among all interviewees, they did not 'dump' their children with the grandparents or any other relatives as a backup. An obvious reason was that they lived far from each other. On the other hand, even when distance was not a problem, they would rather pay for an outside help.

Sixty-six of the questionnaire's respondents (26 per cent) hired a house helper in their home. Hiring a domestic help often occurred among the married respondents (88 per cent). Whenever the single individuals and betrothed respondents admitted that they have domestic helps (11 per cent), it was probably the case that they still stayed with their family and their parents did the hiring.

When queried about the nationality of these domestic helpers, a majority of them appeared to be non-local people (73 per cent), while local people accounted for only 27 per cent. Of these non-local helpers, 94 per cent of them were Indonesians and only 6 per cent were Thais. All these foreign house helpers were women. Almost the same picture on the house helper's nationality was portrayed from the interview, but of the seven house helpers, four of them worked on a daily basis and they were the locals. These part-time helpers went home in the evening, soon after their employers arrived home.

Although most participants have house helpers, some were unreliable. They have to keep changing house helpers, which caused them stress. This happened because they have to re-train the helpers. Qamra explained,

> *"For the past several years I have this maid to help me in the house but she's leaving next month because she wants to get married. I'm very stressful now because I have to find another maid and train that new maid again. I'm having headaches now. Even once I have a new maid, it must be difficult for my children to get used to her. It is very stressful". [* My highlight]*

Training foreign domestic helpers became troublesome due to their lack of comprehension of the Malaysian system and way of life. Qamra explained her problem,

> *"I have this Indonesian maid who at first could only read a bit. One day my child had a fever, and I said to her to give this pink medicine three times a day and this yellow one only when he (the child) had stomach upset. But she did it the other way around because she could not read on the bottles what that was prescribed by the doctor. I was so worried".*

Even though some participants felt uneasy about finding outsiders to manage the house, they still have to rely on them due to the pile of housework. Feeling unable to manage the family adequately, these married working women under 45 were most likely to consider having outside help. However, this inclination has decreased with the increasing age of the

respondents, probably due to the fact that the children were already grown up. Only 1 per cent between 46 to 50 years and more hired a domestic help.

Sixty-five per cent of those who have a house helper earned between RM2001 to RM6000 (£333.5 to £1000), and 18 per cent of them earned RM6001 to RM100001 (£1000.2 to £1668.8) per month. In contrast, only 17 per cent of those who earned RM500 to RM2000 (£83.3 to £333.3) said that they hired a domestic help. To include the wage bracket here is essential because it seems that affluent women with a good salary tend to hire house helpers. Ehrenreich and Hochschild [2003] found that middle-class women in the US and UK managed to juggle career and home by hiring less privileged women. Apparently, women professionals in Malaysia also relied on these types of domestics.

In most cases a house helper was considered a necessity and became more common with the existence of children in a household (82 per cent). Their assistance appeared to increase among the families who have between 1 to 4 children (68 per cent), but started to decrease when larger family members are involved (14 per cent). This might be explained by the children's ages. The younger the children's ages, the more home helps are needed. It might be understood that those families with one to four children consisted of primary school age children as well as children in their formative years who still needed extra attention from adults. On the other hand, those families with five and more children might be comprised of adolescent children who did not seem to require a lot of adults' attention in their lives.

Additionally, the larger the size of the family, the more helps that could be extended within the family. In this case, these adolescents might help their parents in caring for their younger siblings. In fact, it is the tradition of the Malay family to take care of each other, not only with physical help but also materially, particularly if they already earned an income. This scenario was cited in many instances from the interviews. Tijan said,

> *"I understand the hard life we had since childhood, so my main reason to work is to support my sisters. All of them are still schooling and I'm the eldest. I feel responsible for them. I have to spend my money wisely. Normally I allocate one portion (of income) for my family. I pay for their educational fees and when I go back home (family home) I buy things for my sisters. Sometimes I don't even have money for myself. My mum disapproved of this but I feel more satisfied to treat my sisters. I found enjoyment in doing that".*

However, another explanation perhaps is due to the fact that when a family has fewer children, money could be spent on hiring a home help. What Ehrenreich and Hochschild [2003] called a "care deficit" also appeared in Malaysian households. It is a situation of the disappearance of physical care among the family members, which is usually replaced by hiring people from outside the family unit. Research conducted by the Ministry of National Unity and Social Development showed a strong association between an increase in child caring problems and the increase in the number of children in a family. However, the same problem became less obvious with the increase of women's income [Malaysia. 2003a].

A question has been raised on the house helpers' salary payment. Fifty-eight per cent of the respondents, who hired a house helper, used their money to pay for the salary of their house helpers. In addition, six interviewees who have help said they paid for this themselves. I asked why the wife paid for this rather than the husband? Most of them admitted that home management should be their responsibility, but due to their inability to comply, they believed that this outside help should be paid by them, not the husband. On this particular point, apparently women might work so that they can use their income to pay for childcare [Ehrenreich and Hochschild. 2003]. Nayli demonstrated,

> *"I allocate my money to pay for her salary because it (the domestic work) is **after all my responsibility**. I asked for somebody to replace my works at home whole I'm away working so **I should pay for her**". [* **My highlight**]*

Culturally speaking, most women around the world for several decades have accepted that the house keeping is a woman's responsibility rather that her husband's [Cockburn and Ormrod. 1993: Myrdal and Klein. 1968]. They would rather pay for it with their own money if they were unable to manage it themselves because they felt responsible for the management of their private life. However, this scenario was more noticeable among women in Malaysia due to the strong influence of culture and tradition, which stressed the woman's responsibility for the home and children.

Additionally, almost all married interviewees with children believed that they could not sustain their professional life without the assistance of a domestic helper. Alya confessed,

"Without a helper, I do not think I can survive. It is (giving up responsibilities towards the children) a sacrifice for me. We have to trust other people to take care of the children while we are not around. No choice, we have no choice". [* My highlight]

The interviewees clearly explained the seemingly unavailability of any options in childcare. Since they were part of a working couple, they have no choice but to rely on help. Though they might feel guilty in doing so, the family also depends on the money they brought home.

Financial Matters

In this study, the questions concerning the financial issues centred on their autonomy over spending. An attitudinal question was structured to know respondents' viewpoints about the money that they have brought home. Seventy-eight per cent confirmed that they could do anything they wish with their money, whereas around 21 per cent said otherwise. When they were asked whether they contributed part or the whole of their income for family expenditure, 89 per cent of them said they did. The wages that they brought home increased the family's financial strength, which could be used towards a desirable family lifestyle.

However, financial matters became complicated when the question of whether they believed that it was the responsibility of the husband to provide for the maintenance of the family without their financial assistance. It appeared that responses for both 'yes' and 'no' were almost equal in value. Forty-four per cent of the married respondents believed that it should be the husband's responsibility, whereas 49 per cent believed that financial matter was not the responsibility of the husband. Malay women commonly accepted that housework role should be their priority, while leaving the responsibility of earning money to their spouse [Rohana. 1997a]. This is not a phenomenon only found in Malaysia. Female respondents in Britain also believed that the male should be responsible for earning the money while the female partner should be responsible for doing the housework [Vogler. 1994]. There is a tendency in the UK towards a dual-income [Morris. 1990: Siltanen. 1994], however if there were a need, a great majority of women would give up employment rather than the husbands [Brannen. 1992].

The next question was about the willingness of the respondents to give up their income for the family. It was established that 88 per cent would do that,

whereas only 7 per cent said that they were not happy to give up their money for the expenditure and the maintenance of the family. The changing familial pattern, especially when dealing with financial affairs, has long emerged. An anthropological study on family subsistence conducted by Brydon and Chant [1989] on women in Third World countries has shown that there was a transformation of economic dependence between the sexes. Women were no longer the receiver but greatly the co-operator in playing their part to ensure that money came into the family. This practice has in fact happened for a long time. As early as 1871, Mohamed Ibrahim[62], a Malay chronicler, has observed and reported that Malay women and men alike worked hard to safeguard family subsistence. The 18th century Malay rural married women had already worked hand-in-hand with their husbands on the land, while at the same time working to care for the household [Manderson. 1983].

However, no interviewee had a joint banking account, except for joint expenditure via a credit card facility. A separate banking account was the choice. In fact most of them did not understand and could not accept the reason why a married couple should have a joint banking account. This particular scenario seems to be related to Pahl's work [1983: 1980] on the model for analysis of household finance[63]. Although it has not been possible to arrive at a definite picture of any types of Pahl's categorisation to describe my research participants, at least there was absorption of most categories, with the exception of the "shared management".

A majority of the interviewees experienced an "independent management"; some others had an "allowance system", while one experienced the "whole wage systems", yet none of them had a "shared management" which generated an income pooling. Cael provided the experience of her mother with regard to this matter.

> *"Actually my mum told me they have a joint banking account when they got married. But it doesn't work for them, so she advised me not to have it. I myself have never thought to have one because my husband can cope (financially). We **would not share our money in an account** but will share the responsibility to pay from our own bank account". [* My highlight]*

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62 His report was said to be the first literate feminist contribution in the region.
63 The Household Finance Model Analysis of Jan Pahl postulates four basic types of household budget namely 1) The Whole-Wage System is when one partner (usually the male) responsible for managing all household income, 2) the Allowance System is when the main earner hands over a set amount of house-keeping to cover specific items, 3) the Shared Management is when both partners have access to all household income and are jointly responsible for management of, and expenditure from, a common pool, and 4) the Independent Management is when partners have separate incomes which are not pooled and from which different areas of expenditure are designated [Pahl 1980: 1983]. In Pahl's later work [1989] the Shared Management category was divided into whole pool and partial pool.

Almost all the interviewees rejected having a joint bank account. Kaisah was very conservative in her opinion about the responsibility of the husband in providing family expenditure and maintenance for the family. She viewed a joint banking account as a westernised idea, which is irrelevant to Muslims.

> *"I don't understand the need for a joint account. In Islam, the family expenditure rests on the husband's shoulder such as providing a house for a shelter, food subsistence. We should accept that. Unless my husband had a money problem that month, then I will help him. This joint banking is more of the **Western concept**, which is **not relevant** to us". [* My highlight]*

Her simple reaction in considering marriage in a family did not reflect the reality of the issue. The objective of having a joint banking account is to ensure a full commitment on both parts towards the maintenance and expenditure of the family. The "allowance system" that her family seemed to adopt could certainly be seen as a 'male breadwinner' system, which consequently might suggest the traditional structure of some Malaysian households. The idea of a male breadwinner might be ideologically or culturally rooted, and therefore difficult to bring to an end.

Pahl [1989] saw the effect of social class and financial arrangement in a marriage. She believed that the lower income class tended to adopt the sharing balance of power and responsibility in organising their finances. Additionally, she found evidence that suggested the 'independent management' system has increased in Britain, especially among the couples where both partners were in employment and where both earn relatively large amounts of money. This similar finding could be attributed to interviewees and their husbands where both have a well-respected occupation and a good income.

Since these females also work outside the home, the husbands are therefore not the sole breadwinners in the family. Hochschild [1997] looked at the situation in the US in which she believed that regardless of the difficulties experienced by the married female employees with children, many of them still have to opt to work outside the home, obviously to bring money into the household. Nine married interviewees admitted that they shared with their husbands the payment of household expenditure, including the bills, house mortgage and bank loans. Some of them even distributed their income to pay for their children's savings and education.

With both partners working and earning wages, their family was seen to be in a better economic shape than a family with only one working partner. The "dual working families" syndrome [Rapoport and Rapoport. 1971] also started to become a fixture in the Malaysian family structure. An average economic structure in the Malaysian family was highly dependent on having wages brought in by the female partner [Jamilah. 1992c]. The same pattern could be seen from the Western perspective. Crompton [1999] stated that an increase in women's employment in European countries[64] had changed social attitudes towards economic issues in a family. She said that the issue of the breadwinner in a family could apply to both partners now, not just to men.

Non-work-related Interests

The existence of children intensified the focus of female employees' hobbies and interests towards the family. The married ones particularly did not have time to enjoy any non-work-related interests except those related to the family. They tried to continue their hobby of reading, which they had had when they were single, but it was very difficult to achieve. Most of the non-work-related matters were about some family interest, as Alya confided in me,

> *"I used to read a lot, but after marriage, reading is just difficult because I have children of my own already. There are no other activities except the usual housework".*

Some interviewees said that they used to get pleasure from participating in sport but could not enjoy these activities any more after marriage. Haifa remarked,

> *"What I like most is sport. However I cannot enjoy it anymore after having family. I don't have time for that anymore. But when there is company's carnival day, I always participate in it".*

In fact, most married respondents with children did not have any social life apart from their family structure. Whenever they arranged travel, picnic or sightseeing, they went there with family members. Participants agreed that their career limited their interaction with society. The little time they had was allocated only to the family. They did not even have a chance to socialise with the neighbours.

> *"I meet my neighbours but not that frequently because I go home quite late. I do not really have time for them. On the weekends, I have things of my own with the family*

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[64] Among the welfare states such as the Unites Kingdom, Finland and Sweden.

like the need to go shopping, sightseeing or visiting relatives. So we do not have the chance to meet with each other".
[Vel]

The respondents were asked to decide at which place they have more friends. Nearly 48 per cent said that it was mainly at the workplace and only 7 per cent believed that their friends were mainly close to their home and neighbourhood. Having to spend most of the time during the day at the workplace forced them to establish a strong social friendship with other people, apart from their colleagues. The only time left for them to socialise with their neighbours was over the weekend. But then most of them might use their weekends to spend time with their own immediate family members.

A non-work-related activity could be both positive and negative within a stipulated condition. A few family-related-interests such as cooking could be enjoyable and relaxing, but in a different situation, cooking could be otherwise. To feel that a certain activity is an obligatory duty changed the enjoyment that it might bring about. Cael mentioned,

> *"Actually I enjoy myself in the kitchen, I don't cook much but when I do I feel cooking is relaxing. But it would be different if I **have to do it**. It is **not an enjoyable** thing to do anymore. It just becomes a **routine** to you". [* My highlight]*

When a matter was enforced, most people were reluctant to oblige. In this case, most married interviewees could not find any enjoyment in doing the housework because it has become a common daily routine.

When the participants were asked about a non-work-related interest they have, most of those married would list it from a familial perspective, whereas the singles were prepared to change their current hobby to fit in with their family life later. Bazla admitted,

> *"I'm really a book worm. I read a lot, novels, science fictions, and fantasy. I just finished Lords of the Rings you know (laugh). But **perhaps** if I get married, I have to change this hobby of mine. From the experience of my married friend, they just can't cope with reading anymore except maybe magazines. Because there is so much to do at home with the family, they have to abandon their hobby. I **might be** in the same boat, who knows". [* My highlight]*

The singles have already accepted that once married, their single activities such as reading might have to be altered to suit family commitments.

Rating at Home

This study found that the married respondents without any hesitation rated themselves as excellent and good (69 per cent) in managing their home. Others rated themselves as fairly good (23 per cent) and very rarely they rated themselves as a bad house manager (2 per cent), accepting that managing domestic affairs has become a natural talent for women [Marsh and Arber. 1992: Jamilah. 1992c]. This study seems to share similarities.

Conclusion

The timing of a marriage and the composition of the family in Malaysia are changing. Malaysian women marry later in life, and the size of family is getting smaller [Jamilah. 2001]. But one point that is continuously shared by a majority of women is that family is important. All women in this study inclined to give priority to the family.

The ideology of the traditional culture of the family outdid the ideology of the modernised career women. Women embraced the new tasks of getting a job and earning for the family, but traditional familial expectations were not relinquished, and men as a group seldom made any parallel move to undertake the domestic roles traditionally held by women. A clearer picture on why this situation happened is elucidated in Chapter Nine. Nevertheless, due to this situation, it was easy to grasp the reasons why most married participants saw family and home as inseparable to their lives. The same situation was also evident among single people, who also emphasised the importance of the family of origin. Both groups felt responsible for their family.

Female participants in this study verified the situation of a "second shift" starting with a shift at the workplace, followed by a shift at home. The dual-role contradiction is indeed an unresolved dilemma faced by most married women who happen to have a career. It showed that these women faced difficulty in balancing up the need to be in the labour force while still carrying out their role at home. According to them, the idea of balancing tasks and time between home and work was only a myth. They were unable to balance and separate the two spheres successfully. Therefore, setting up boundaries between professional life and personal life were important in

allowing the different aspects of life to coexist. They applied a restricted time and space between home and workplace. They had restricted the demands of work as well as the demands of home. One common strategy was to reject the demands of the job after a certain time of day, while optimising the time spent at work.

It is also interesting to report here that a majority of employees felt that they were more appreciated, less stressed and happier at work than at home. According to Hochschild [1997; 41] *"because women are constantly on call to the needs of other family members, they are less able to relax at home"*. Managing this obligatory 'work' made them feel stressed [Larson and Richards. 1994]. Another way to explain this situation is perhaps due to the fact that they received formal recognition from the company in the form of job appraisals and better wages, yet they received none at home.

It is found that money became the paramount factor for the participants to work. Instead of relying on husbands, married women in this study shared the financial responsibility so that they have a comfortable family lifestyle. Even though female employees received support from husbands in their careers, they were also aware that the support was gained at a price – in the form of continuing domestic responsibility to the family. Because it was the woman who felt guilty, they were responsible for the household management and consequently organised it. They saw the necessity of having domestic help, and on many occasions, married female workers would use their wages to pay for the house helper to compensate for their inability to be full time house managers. A house helper was needed in a household mainly to take care of the children and to manage the home chores.

Employed women in my study have to rely on the availability of the house helpers. Although they might not be keen to allow outsiders in the house, due to their position as career women, they have to hire domestics to assist them at home. The house helpers would do most domestic chores, including the housework and childcare, so that the career women would still enjoy quality time with their husband and children.

The existence of an outside help actually heightened the lack of husbands' participation at home. In fact, when a domestic help was employed, she frequently took over the husband's domestic responsibilities rather than the wife's.

Women in my study talked of 'guilt' quite casually. They felt guilty towards their children if they were spending more time at the workplace. Even though they felt stressed and tired to care for their children after long hours of working, they also could not bear to be distant from them. This is a fundamental characteristic of family-work orientation among my women.

The interviewees' husbands allowed their wives to work, yet with a clear condition that they should always be aware of domestic responsibility to the family. However, it is also important to mention about a reciprocated relationship between wives and husbands are appearing in Malaysia. Husbands expected to gain something out from their wives' careers and professionalism. Although financial assistance seems to be their main expectation, some husbands also expect to be married to intelligent, open-minded, confident and independent wives so that their marriage life can be both interesting and challenging.

Additionally, in discussing non-work-related interests and hobbies, both the married and the single groups showed the same inclination to say that they did not have any other interests in life except work and the family. The findings showed that the non-work-related interests that they have frequently revolved around housekeeping and cooking activities.

This chapter pointed up the dilemma for women to integrate their roles in the workplace and at home. The gender relational issues at home are prominent, which lead to the questions of a life imbalance. It is believed that this imbalance is drawn from the cultural traditions of the nation. The next chapter therefore explores the effects of cultural tradition in the form of male dominance that exists and still prevails in Malaysia.

Introduction

Malaysian women are living their everyday lives in a context in which the 'family' is highly politicised. There are frequent debates in the media and by the politicians about the implications of women going out working and about the pressures and costs of juggling work and home. In the last few years, there has been a nation-wide moral panic about the role of working mothers in producing delinquent children. Also, there was widespread anxiety about the social problems of the teenagers such as loafing about in shopping centres and having promiscuous relationships. Representations of family in the last decade have been embedded within a larger 'Asian family' structure that was strongly supported by the Islamic elements of the country [Stivens. 1998b]. Asian ethics and morality provide a buffer against the undesirable aspects of modernisation. The Government campaigns about 'happy families' of recent years have a crudely patriarchal model of family life with the father as the head and protector of the family and the mother as a warm and supportive helpmeet.

The fundamental issue of this chapter develops around the position of cultural traditions in Malaysia. In fact, they uniquely characterise the Malaysian way of life and thus guided people in every sense [Stivens. 2000: Wazir-Jahan. 1992]. Cultural traditions persist in different ways and in different parts of the country. The East Coast of Malay Peninsula has stronger Islamic influences and customary practices (or adat[65]) than other parts of Malaysia. Malay women on the West Coast appeared to challenge a strong uniformity of cultural traditions. They were beginning to re-evaluate these traditional authorities. It is an indicative of change towards modern perspectives. At present the wave of modernity as a result of the effects of industrialisation and globalisation has gradually changed the depth of cultural traditions in Malaysia. However, current cultural paradigms are frequently contradictory in an era of industrialisation and globalisation in Malaysia.

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65 *Adat* is a customary law in Malaysia.

In the area of work and home, women endure unfavourable circumstances while men reap the benefits. Often it involves a conflict of interest and priority especially in women's career orientation. When the country needs to utilise and maximise human power in the name of development, women are expected to contribute their power and skills in the workforce too. However, women are also expected to dedicate their energy and emotion at home. This situation also happens elsewhere around the globe, but it is more complicated when it involves a deep cultural expectation such as in Malaysia that says a woman's place is secondary to men. In her private space, a woman's place is at home with her family.

Most discussions on cultural traditions are about religion and *adat* - the systems most immediately affecting the Malay life. Both are prominently placed in public consciousness. Religion and *adat* put an extreme importance on women's homemaker role. In most families in Malaysia, the husbands are heads of the household and when wives are employed, the husbands' position remains unchanged (even in cases when wives are earning more than their husbands). The legacy of the earliest structural conditions of Malaysian society, particularly from the 1950s to 1970s showed that women were perceived as being responsible for giving birth, rearing children and the maintenance of the home [Nik Safiah. 1992].

This chapter explores the broader discussions of some cultural traditions in the family structure of Malaysia in the 1990s and the present. In its effort to understand patriarchal aspects in the country, this chapter needs to begin with the illustration of some unique examples of cultural traditions in the family structure, particularly among the Malays. Subsequently it elaborates upon the effects of the two sources of cultural traditions in Malaysia - religion and *adat*. Before discussing the situation of women, work and home from a traditional perspective, this chapter examines the idealism of marriage among the respondents. Then it follows with a discussion about the husbands' participation in household management. What kinds of support and assistance do the participants receive at home? How do their spouses contribute to the maintenance of the household?

The discussion will focus on the situation of Malays because they were the majority of the research participants.

A Portrayal of the Malaysian Traditional Family Structure

It is interesting to identify some distinctive cultural traditions of the Malaysian family structure. Although the family structure in Malaysia has generally moved towards a nuclear type, the legitimacy of the extended family never fades away [Jamilah. 2001]. Couples still seek parents' advice and kin's approval in life. Gratitude to old people, particularly parents, who are highly respected, is still practiced.

This study found that most interviewees showed uniformity in their gratitude towards their elders. The most common forms of gratitude paid by the Malaysian children to their parents are in the form of having a monthly (or annual) *balik kampung*[66] routine to assist the parents and family of each couple, by giving part of their income to them and being responsible for the schooling or education of their younger siblings. These social expectations could be best understood in relation to the concept of *balas-budi*. The most general meaning of *balas-budi* is reciprocation through gratitude. It is used in reference to the parent-child relationship, which specifically means the repayment of a child's debt to her parents for having brought her up.

Of the thirty interviewees, fifteen of them practised *balas-budi* with their parents. Apparently, this traditional social practice was not exclusive to the Malays. The non-Malays also embraced the same degree of commitment to the family. Razan said, *"I don't spend much money on myself. A quarter of my salary goes to my family at home. It's my turn to take the responsibility"*. They wished to repay the kindness they received from parents. The concepts of 'duty' and 'obligation' do not exclusively refer to the Malaysians, for example they also operate in the British family structure. Economic support is one of the family co-operations that are given to the kin group [Finch. 1989].

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[66] *Balik kampung* literally means returning to the village or hometown of the family of origin. The working couples that reside in a neo-locality area away from each side of the family commonly practise this cultural tradition. *Balik kampung* always happens at festive times such as the Eid, Chinese New Year, Deepavali, Christmas and other festivals of smaller population groups such as Gawai and Thaipusam. Additionally, *balik kampung* can also happen when there is a national or state holiday.

To illustrate the context of *balas-budi* in the form of taking up part of parents' financial responsibility towards younger family members, Tijan, who was an elder daughter in her family and who was earning income, believed she should allocate a proportion of her income to support the schooling of her siblings. Consequently, she felt satisfied by doing so.

> *"I came from a poor family, I did understand the economic condition of my family. My main aim is to support my sisters (especially) since they are still studying. I have to spend my money wisely. I have **a portion** for myself to pay car loan, house rent, pay for the bills, but I also have **a portion** for my family. It is common for me to pay the school fees of my sisters. Buy things for them. I feel **satisfied** to do that". [* My highlight]*

A majority of the interviewees put aside some amount of money for the use of their family of origin specifically for parents and siblings and thereafter felt satisfied in doing so. Elnoor said,

> *"I give **a quarter** of my income to my father (i.e. the family, **a quarter** (of the income is) to pay for my car loan, **a quarter** to spend, and **another quarter** to save. That's how I work with my money. I have **four allotments** every month". [* My highlight]*

Specifying an earning allotment was a common phenomenon among the single respondents in this study. But when she married, the allotment might be changed according to the needs and situations. She might reduce the amount given to the parents because she has her own family, or she might give the money to the parents only occasionally. Vel illustrated,

> *"I used to give RM1000 (£166.67) per month to my mum, but since my marriage especially after I had my first child, I had to reduce it. I still gave a monthly allowance to her but not as much as before (laugh). I feel bad. But she had never complained. In fact she did not really care for me to give the money or not, it is just me who feels **responsible** to her and the family. Usually our mother won't ask for that. We just **feel the need** to give it to her, right?" [* My ighlight]*

With the money they received from employment, female workers are able to take responsibility for the family. This phenomenon is a demonstration of the traditional family structure. Malay families in particular expect their working children, especially the unmarried ones, to help out with the financial affairs of their family of origin [Hing and Rokiah. 1986: Nik Safiah. 1992]. Once they are married, these children might have another financial arrangement to fulfil their responsibility to their family of origin, perhaps by supplying the money only when they meet or giving this monthly financial 'obligation' at a reduced amount.

Another form of *balas budi* is to be near to one's parents. Even though she was occupying a very 'comfortable' post at the Senior Vice President's Finance and Business Development Unit at PetCo's Head Office in Barat,

Cael simply said that she had insisted on being transferred to PetCo Timur because she wanted to stay near to her parents' place.

On this point the illustrations do not show any conflict between work and family. Female workers work so that they can perform their duty as good daughters by showing their gratitude to their family. However, in the next discussion, the conflict starts to appear especially when female workers have their own family. It seems money is needed for the family, yet many other female responsibilities within the family are not changing. How can cultural traditions separate financial need from other family obligations among female workers?

Having given a general portrayal of Malaysian social life prior to discussing the conflict of women in work and family, this study feels the need to clarify the sources that contribute to the existing cultural traditions. They are religion and *adat*, which are regarded as the focal collective framework in Malaysia [Stivens. 2000].

The Effects of Religion and *Adat* on Woman

It is clear that Malay women's roles might be reinforced by a strong ideology that stressed a male dominance in certain important social processes [Raja Rohani. 1991]. The key to women's standing is thus to look at the ways in which maleness and femaleness are culturally constructed. In raising the issue of gender in Malaysian society, religious systems - specifically Islam - have to be mentioned. By definition, a Malay individual is also a Muslim. She has to follow Muslim rules of behaviour and Islamic laws. Religion does not belong to the domain of privacy but is a collective and public matter. Not adhering to Islamic prescriptions such as eating in public during the fast or breaking the rules of sexual relationships are matters subject to public accusation and punishment. This 'restrictive' phenomenon is further strengthened by the Malay *adat*, which is the axis of social and cultural organisations in Malay society [Wilkinson. 1957].

Adat or custom appears to be influenced by the past and present religions of the Malays [Mahathir. 1970: Wazir-Jahan. 1998: 1990]. The concept of 'good' (or uprightness) in the Malay ethical code might not refer to 'pleasant' but

more to be understood as proper[67]. Formalities and ritual rites rate very highly in the Malay concept of values. To depart from formality is considered *"improper, unbecoming and rude"* [Mahathir. 1970; 157]. Therefore, *adat* is an indispensable institution in Malay sociological analysis.

Adat represents the formal and conscious beliefs of the Malays from which one could trace cultural and social production of ideas and relations in the wider society. Society on the other hand, expected members to abide by *adat* or they would face social stigma. Gender distinctions are made in the upbringing of the children. In general, women and men in Malaysia learned in childhood the respective domains of activity in which women were identified with a 'domestic' orientation and men with the 'public'. As a daughter approaches puberty, her role becomes distinctively clear. Not only does she provide household help, she also takes on the duties of a 'responsible daughter'. While responsibilities are also placed upon the son, he, by contrast, is allowed to enjoy a carefree freedom until such time as he takes over family responsibilities (particularly when he establishes his own family unit).

These traditional perspectives have to a certain extent had an effect on common people's lives, and women have been an important target group because they are regarded as guardians of moral order and carriers of traditional values [Heyzer et. al. 1989]. Since religion and *adat* are a burden placed on women, this chapter needs to explain briefly the effect of religion and *adat* in the social system. However, what follows does not pretend to deal systematically or comprehensively with the cultural traditions of women in Malaysia. It is rather to shed some light on women's position in the country and the impact of cultural traditions on the society.

Religious Perspective on Work

A majority of the respondents in this study are Muslims (96 per cent). Though non-Malay representations were too few to give a general impression, their opinions are still useful for the purpose of comparison. If the Malays in general showed a high religious affiliation in whatever steps and decisions

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[67] Normally, to be well thought of, and what is good for the community, is also assumed to be good for the individual (because generally an individual is regarded as secondary to the community).

they made in life, the non-Malays were less concerned about their beliefs. When discussing the perspective of Buddhism and Taoism on female married workers, Razan observed,

> *"I actually do not know whether my religion is Buddhism or Taoism because both are quite similar to each other, and then I don't really go deep to my religion like the Muslims who have al Qur'an. In Buddhism, we also have a Book but I don't really read it deeply what Buddhism says about this and that (but) I think my religion is not saying anything bad for the working women. For me, if we can manage both sides then we can go on with what we are doing".*

Razan's individual attitude was very different from the Malays who strictly viewed Islam as the framework of life. Apparently, among the Muslim interviewees, everything in life should be done within the religious perspective. In many cases, the respondents associated the idealism of working with an unscientific religious explanation. Some respondents specified at a greater depth the association of work with Islamic paradigms. They believed that work was an act of *ibadah*[68]. Most of their answers are reflected in the pledge to contribute to the nation and society. Respondent 4 wrote, *"Work is an ibadah to me. I work so that I can pay the zakat[69] (i.e. alms) to the society"*.

Moreover, female workers also felt an intrinsic fulfilment working at PetCo. Respondent 144 mentioned, *"apart from working, there are religious classes during lunch hours organised by the management, as well as various activities sponsored by PetWa. I felt grateful to work here because the company also pays attention on such activities to feed one's soul"*. At all levels of personal and interpersonal behaviour of the interviewees, Islam is observed defining the roles and attitudes and thereby establishing one's identity.

Additionally the significance of religious perspective was strongly felt by the interviewees. Nayli and Widyan indicated the choice of the workplace as an important factor in having a better life. Both of them were content to work at PetCo Timur because they had the opportunity for more meaningful *ibadah* practices and to join many religious classes for spiritual satisfaction. One valuable observation shows that the participants at PetCo Timur feel a higher religious affiliation than those at other research sites. When they talked about family and home, female interviewees at PetCo Timur always brought

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[68] *Ibadah* is originally an Arabic term that refers to the submission to God, and therefore whole conception of *ibadah* concerns honest actions for the sake of Islam.
[69] *Zakat* is an obligatory donation to the fellow Muslim brothers and sisters.

religious aspects into the conversation[70]. Most probably Timur's religious atmosphere had influenced how they perceived life. For instance, they said that once the office hours were over, they would have to rush home to resume their role at home as a home-manager. By comparison, the female employees at PetCo Barat rarely have the same view about this issue. One female secretary to the Senior Manager, who is married with teenage sons, mentioned that she would rather stay at the office (although she had completed her office tasks) than head back home, because she felt there was nothing much to do at home. She represented a few isolated cases that experienced Hoschchild's "reversal world" [1997], which did not share with the majority.

It is equally interesting to correlate the factors of money-interest with religious-affiliation among the participants of this study. As has previously been discussed, the importance of financial affairs turned out to be a common motivation in work. Earning wages has become a security in times of family disaster as well as a material comfort in coping with the life. It is fascinating to note that some of the participants attached religious perspectives such as performing *hajj*[71] to Makkah as their motivational factor to work. Respondent 4 in her questionnaire booklet wrote, *"I work so that I can earn some money. When the time comes, I can use the money that I earned to go to Makkah for hajj"*. Likewise, respondent 62 observed that a job she has now *"can fulfil my dream to perform hajj in Makkah"*. Obviously, religious jurisdictions are significant to most participants. They would incorporate the teachings of the religion in every aspect of life.

Additionally, this study also revealed a strong religious commitment practised among most interviewees. In general understanding, Islam says that a wife who wants to work outside the home ought to get her husband's permission. Cael said,

> *"I think (we) need to give priority to what Islam has said. Islam says we need to be a good wife and obey our husbands. (Thus) we need to seek **husbands' approval** if we want to work. (That is why) nowadays **when you have decided to settle down, you need to make sure that he lets you work"**. [* My highlight]*

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[70] Bear in mind that the place of origin of these interviewees was from all over Malaysia. They only came to Timur to work.
[71] *Hajj* is a pilgrimage to Makkah, which is one of the five obligatory religious actions required by every Muslim who financially and physically can afford to go, at least once in a lifetime.

To be a good wife is a societal expectation that married women should adhere to. At least sixteen interviewees talked about the authority of religious jurisdiction for familial structure, which placed career as secondary. In the above quotation, Cael also advised the unmarried women to establish a sort of 'contract' with the husband-to-be about working outside home.

As the philosophical concept of 'reward' and 'punishment' is the main essence of religious life, most interviewees had positive associations about their contribution to the family, which therefore made them contented. Jaida elaborated,

> *"I feel more meaningful* **to serve** *my husband (and family),* **do all the necessary things for him.** *After all it is the easiest chance for me* **to get the reward** *(laugh). (By) thinking that way, I feel more satisfied".* [* **My highlight**]

Attending to the needs of the husband is one of the ways for the wife to get this reward. The way Jaida laughed while describing her relationship with her husband might show her disturbed feeling about this household arrangement. However, she managed to justify this scenario with the concept of religious reward. Acquiring religious reward is the main target of every Muslim.

At this point, it might be observed that religion is interpreted in various different ways. It could be argued that many practices are religious, but with a slightly different degree of depth where religious actions are not strictly laid down. This scenario happens because frequently religious justifications were lost to male dominance traditions that imposed women's place at home. Islam has never said that women should not get involved in paid work[72] [Ling. 1991]. However, the structure of Malaysian Muslim society is synonymously equal to a male-dominance society [Zainah. 1991]. Thus, it tended to restrain women in the private space. For example, before the midpoint of the twentieth century, Malay women were almost barred from participating in the work force. Only after the Second World War, and especially after Independence in 1957, gradually they were allowed to work outside home [Ahmad. 1993].

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[72] Even the wives of the Prophet worked to earn a living for the family and mingled with the society at the market places. For example, Prophet's wife, Saidatina Khadijah R.A. was one of the prosperous traders in Makkah.

In many incidents throughout the fieldwork, I found that Islam is also being used as a justification for women to work due to sheer necessity. However, the issues of women at work become complicated when the Malay *adat* further enhanced the notion of a female's place in the private world of home.

Adat in the Family Structure

On the basis of societal expectations, marriage and children are important for the well being of women and the continuity of the society. According to Baginda [1986], a Malay woman is essentially without status until she is married and has children. Children are therefore viewed as assets and security for elderly parents.

Society expects women to manage the private life of home, and thus their role is to be the home manager in the household. However, when there is an interruption in the ongoing process between the private and professional life, a conflict may occur. In this case, this study detects a degree of tension constructed by the surroundings of the career wives and/or mothers. Despite the obvious commitment that women had to their children and the amount of energy they spent in trying to organise their families, they were often left with a sense of guilt that they had not done enough [Jamilah. 1992c]. Furthermore, women were likely to be made to feel guilty by the society if these home-related responsibilities were not properly attended to [Jamilah. 1994b].

The traditional sex-typed division of family labour dictates women's primary responsibility to the housework and children, even if they are in employment. Comments made by people outside the family contributed to that sense of guilt. Syaza experienced a problem raised by the in-laws.

> *"My mother-in-law is a full time housewife. She can't understand what I have to go through. I've tried my best managing the household. She is too busy body towards what she called the welfare of her son and grandchild. That makes me **guilty** and angry too. I always tell my husband to inform his mother not to interfere in our (family) life". [* My highlight]*

The clash between the older and younger generation as regards family life happens frequently and is not easy to solve. Due to different socialisation exposure, generally the previous generation was more restricted in its upbringing, and therefore had a stronger traditional familial view [Raja Rohani. 1991]. The latter generation was exposed to the current changes in

life such as getting education and joining the workforce. Due to the different experiences they had, disagreement in parenting style and other familial issues often occurred.

Additionally, different employment status – either as a full time housewife or in employment – will determine her perception towards another woman. An employed woman was easily upset when receiving negative comments from others. Onsun faced a problem with neighbours, who were housewives.

> *"If I'm a full time housewife of course my husband expects the best (from me) at home. But because both of us working he does understand our situation. However, my neighbours who are full time housewife do not understand our arrangement. They feel strange to see me come out here and there (for outstation), or I drive my car and my husband drives his. They ask how can we live like this. It's a bit **nuisance** to me that make me **stressful**. But what to do, it's life". [* My highlight]*

Full-time housewives might not be able to understand the situation, which women workers had to face. Most employed mothers would already be depressed about their inability to manage the two spheres of life. Negative remarks from others only intensified their vulnerable feeling. In this case, this study noticed that the research participants perceived the situation of their nuclear family from the perspective of an extended family system (including the neighbours). Finch and Mason [1993] also found considerable evidence suggesting the relationship with the wider kin group remains relevant in British families.

Following this discussion, how do the research participants define the idea of marriage?

Marriage

Marriage is believed inevitable by the interviewees, which is in line with the general expectation of the society. For many, marriage institution is about the romantic desire for love, companionship and children. No matter how far they go or how high their academic attainment, women in general want to get married. In fact, the traditional expectation to settle down among single female engineers in this study was high. Elnoor, who was still single, spoke about the ideal of marriage and what it could do for her in future.

> *"I want to get married. To be a spinster is not what I have in mind. **I cannot imagine being alone in my old age.** Who will take care of me later? In a marriage, I have a husband and children with me. It is more of **an emotional security**". [* My highlight]*

Marriage would guarantee a woman that her spouse and children would take care of her when she was old [Manderson. 1980]. Moreover, children were seen as assets and security for parents in old age [Noraini. 2001].

It is very interesting to observe that some interviewees have a rather simple perspective when looking at life. A marriage is considered a target in life. Alya said,

> *"I think the **targets in life** among most Malay women is to get married at a certain age, then have children. I already met those targets". [* My highlight]*

An early marriage is encouraged by Malaysian cultural norms. People with a conservative way of thinking always see the delayed marriage phenomenon among women to be due to spending too much time in education [Lie and Lund. 1994: Siti Rohani. 1991]. I asked my interviewees the ideal age to get married for professionals like them. Most single interviewees were of the opinion that the ideal marriage age for people like them was between mid 20s to early 30s[73]. It was calculated that after graduating from the university, they should work for at least 2 years so that they could get working experiences as well as earning some money before the marriage. This marriage trend is also portrayed in Britain and Europe [Berthoud and Gershuny. 2000: Walby. 1997]. Damia said,

> *"It is a matter of personal choice. But today's trend is moving to 26, 27, 28 rather than early 20s, because if you are 26, 27 years old, your career is already stable. You know how expensive getting married is. Having said so, it seems that I'm not in the trend because I'm getting married now (at 25). I'm just explaining the trend".*

When I asked whether the singletons in this study ever thought of not getting married at all, Damia explicitly said that she would definitely want to get married because it secured her emotional security.

> *"(In my life) I always have had the **intention** to settle down. I think everybody needs somebody because at the end of the day, even if you are so committed to work, home is still the place where you go. So it is nice to have somebody waiting there. It is more for **emotional security". [* My highlight]***

Of the ten singletons, seven of them explicitly admitted that they wanted to settle down and have a family while the other three would only marry when they had found the right men. The married interviewees believed in a contented feeling associated with marital life. Nayli asked me why I had not

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[73] This trend was actually dissimilar to the study by Tengku Aizan [1998] that showed 23 years old was the ideal age for marriage among women. However, according to my interviewees early 20s was far too early to settle down. The different perspective about the ideal marriage age might be due to women's educational difference. Since my interviewees are educated people, they tend to view life based from their life experience while Tengku Aizan's study concerned women in general.

married yet, and then urged me *"I used to feel like that too (i.e. a single life means a simple life). (As a single) I feel I had all the freedom I wanted. But somehow when I got married, I feel I'm a better person now. I feel content. You should try too. I know in your position now you feel like you have it all especially you'll be getting Ph.D. soon. But trust me it is not enough. You should have your own family. And in your case, you should be fast. Men feel intimidated with your position, and also remember about age factor too".* Her well-intended act was normal advice commonly given by society, especially parents and the elderly to unmarried women. At least six of them were pushed in some way by their family and relatives to get married. Staying unmarried denotes imperfection in life. Farah said, *"Whenever I go home, my family always hinted for me to get married soon. They said, just living with friends like that is not perfect. I actually do not really understand what they meant not perfect".*

The 'perfection' may refer to both religious justifications that everything, including human beings, comes in pairs, and the *adat* rationalisation that a woman should be taken care of by a man. However, most interviewees understood that the marriage should be for the right reason to the right man. Damia opined,

> *"Marriage is a personal thing. Since you're going to be stuck with the same guy for the rest of your life, you might as well choose the right person. I've seen my friends (of the same age) who got married while studying regretting their decision. And now their marriage is rocky, as if they had not enjoyed much of their single life. Actually they should do one step at a time. They need to become somebody first before they be with somebody". [* My highlight]*

Damia seemed to have a modern attitude towards marriage. Her words on marriage as a personal choice echoed the voices of many interviewees who were caught in between the prescription of *adat* and an individualised perspective in looking at marriage. Although marriage is prescribed as culturally essential, according to her, a woman should only get married once she has successfully established herself as a person. This study sensed that most interviewees were trapped at a dividing line, showing that they were obeying cultural tradition rather than violating it. Their irregular attitude towards individualisation might indicate that women were in a state of rebellion.

Ideally, when two individuals get married, they are expected to live together till death. It is important to meet the right person who shares interests. Generally, partner-compatibility is very important among the Malays. When a Malay woman marries, she needs to have someone who shares the same

qualities. In a Malay context, this situation is called *kufu*, which comes from the Arabic word, which literally means spouse-suitability. A woman is presumed to marry a man who is her equal, or greater, especially in lineage, age, education and income. These aspects may bring a good image not only to her but also to her family. In this case, a female engineer is expected to settle down with a male engineer or another equivalent professional with a better income. An older and higher physical stature is preferred in the marriage candidate. Furthermore, one's family lineage is also taken into consideration. Cael illustrated,

> *"Once you want to get married, you have to consider about having the **same background**, you should even try to get the right suitability of both families. My parents are teachers as well as his parents. (Thus) we are more understanding to each other. That is why it is **important to marry a compatible partner**. We **need to have a partner of the same status"**. [* My highlight]*

Unlike female engineers, who have husbands with the same background or the same executive level or higher, those who have husbands of lesser status were reluctant to talk openly about their husbands' occupation and income. Che-Dania, a senior researcher executive, who is married to a soldier, became a bit tense, *"should I tell? I don't think it is appropriate for me to talk about this at all"*. When I justified my reasons for putting these questions[74], she then said, *"Well, I'm one of the minority group who was not married to engineers like others"*. The way she had reacted could be read as her unwillingness for outsiders to know her marital position of marrying a man who was beneath her social status, which in general was not accepted by society. By and large, society expects that the financial matters in a family should be the husband's responsibility. In her case, as the situation might be different, she might feel it to be disreputable.

Financial issues become one of the main factors for women going to work. However, money is a complex matter. People were cautious when the question of money was raised. Most female engineers have husbands with the same professional classification or above, so I did not sense their hesitation in relaying their husband's income. The usual response I received was that the husbands' income higher was higher than the interviewees'. Che-Dania however was upset when this question was asked,

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[74] I explained to her that I needed basic information on husband's occupation and income in order to understand the relationship of the couples at home. I gave the example that a majority of the interviewees whom I already interviewed (at that point of time) were married to engineers too. By knowing the husbands' position in the family, I might get the insights of the professional assistance and support they received from their engineer husbands. The justification of the questions needed to be clear here because obviously it seemed that some interviewees were offended by the nature of the questions. Yet revealing the motive of the questions might have also upset them.

"I don't think it is relevant to know my husband's earning here. But anyway, I just can tell his is lower from what I earn now".

Her reaction was understandable because it is widely understood that the husbands' main responsibility is to provide and maintain the household [Jamilah. 2001]. When the same sets of question were put to those interviewees who have been married to partners of the same or higher occupational level and income, they talked unreservedly.

When I constructed this question on a husband's income, I already sensed that it would create discomfort to some of my Malaysian interviewees. These were the people who would not like to share personal and intimate issues with others. Imani was uncomfortable about discussing her husband's financial situation, so only confided in me that, *"I helped him a lot for the household expenditure"*. In fact Pahl [1989; 1] also found the same finding among the British in the 1980s, when she wrote, *"the financial arrangement of married people must be one of the most private, yet also one of the most important of topics. The secrecy with which couple protect their financial affairs is as great as the secrecy surroundings sexual relationships"*. On the other hand, this impediment should not be taken for granted. I believed that some acknowledgement about the financial arrangements within a marriage would increase understanding of the nature of relationships between women and men. Since the money-control issue would lead me to understand the degree of autonomy among my interviewees, I included the question in the interviews.

An illustration by Damia would explain the situation of uneasiness among the wives who married husbands of a lower social position. She believed that a wife would respect her mature and educated husband.

> *"When it is a time to settle down, you have to find a man of your age group and academic background because you need somebody with whom you can respect". [* My highlight]*

The logical (or perhaps illogical) reason behind this spouse selection rests on the superior status that it is believed a man should possess. He has to be mature in age because it relates to being wise. He should be taller than his wife, to avoid social awkwardness. He has to be well educated because he is the head of the family. He has to have a good income because he is the breadwinner. As it happens, most interviewees chose spouses who conformed to the criteria. Of twenty-eight interviewees who are married and potential

partners, twenty-two of their spouses were engineers and had a professional background. The other six felt uneasy about sharing any familial information. The interviewees' responses in this study showed a high level of conventional views towards the issues of marriage, home and work.

A Conventional Perspective on Women, Work and Home

Even though the social structure of patriarchal elements in private life might have shrivelled in Malaysia and men have not really insisted that masculine power must continue, women themselves would like to be attached to the home and therefore find happiness there [Nik Safiah. 1992].

A question on the gender role perspectives in work and the family was put to the respondents. Almost 59 per cent of them agreed and only 17 per cent disagreed with the statement that a husband should be regarded as the principal breadwinner of the family and the wife as the primary housekeeper. Twenty-four per cent of them chose to be indifferent in their opinion. In the same vein, the latest research conducted by Jamilah [2001] has seen the recognition of the husband as the leader of the family, even in cases when he is not the main breadwinner.

Undeniably, female married workers have to face two different situations in life. They have to manage the home as well as participate in the labour force. It was fundamentally important to lay the emphasis on the influence of conventional ideals in Malaysia, whereby husbands are the head of the family [Jamilah. 2001], and the roles of wives fit in with the husbands [Chang. 1992: Siti Rohani. 1991].

One of the aims of this study is to know the degree of respondents' commitment to work, when most of their lives are influenced by traditional and religious values. Apparently, some married interviewees believed that work was good for them, but most importantly, they should ask permission from their husbands (or fiancés) to work outside the home. Whatever the decision was, they would be submissive to their men's wishes.

Two questions on employment and the family were asked. Almost 81 percent of the respondents disagreed that working has a bad influence on their

children. However, when asked to give an opinion on the statement that *"a place of a married woman is really at home if the husband can afford the family expenditure"*, 54 per cent agreed and 31 per cent of them disagreed with the statement, while 14 per cent were indifferent with the statement. This finding has at least provided a platform for debate for the research's hypothesis that working respondents still adopted a conservative way of looking at life. If they have the opportunity to be at home and care for the family, most of them would gladly welcome the idea. But due to financial reasons, they have to continue on working, at least until their husbands are able to produce sufficient income for family expenditure.

Additionally, in spite of earning more money than their husbands, if a crisis of priority occurred, they would definitely choose the family rather than a career. Although she was still single, Amni-Bayati admitted, *"If my husband says no (to work) then it means I can't work (laugh)"*, which meant that she would quit working if her husband disapproved. Looking carefully at the way she describe the situation with instant mirth, one might wonder whether she was true to her words about quitting work or just wanted to conform to the societal expectation of obeying her husband. This study cannot measure the sincerity of her response, although she appeared to have an easy solution for a seemingly complicated issue. Her pre-determination to stop working if she received discouragement from her husband was indeed a conventional view in looking at career life, which is shared by some thousands of other women in Malaysia.

To scrutinise deeper on traditional values, the interview question was supported by a well-known Malay traditional proverb about the correlation of woman and her place in the kitchen. Literally, the proverb was translated into English, *"even though a woman receives a high education or has a good career, she will still end up in the kitchen.* Without difficulty, twenty-five interviewees, including the non-Malays (83 per cent), understood the meaning of that particular proverb, and accepted the idea of placing the kitchen as a 'supposedly' woman's place. Elnoor, who was single, supported the proverb,

> *"It is indeed **true**. Even though I have a high educational qualification, I still have to go to the kitchen. It is **expected** for me, but it is not so for my brother. So I think 'yes' women's place is somehow still at the kitchen".* [* **My highlight**]

Despite understanding the unequal daughter-son relationship at home, interviewees still did what was expected of them. Razan, who was non-Malay, had to acknowledge a woman's position in the kitchen, which was not meant for men.

> *"I accepted that proverb because I just wonder if women do not go to the kitchen I don't think the men will. Being a daughter in the family, I was expected by my parents to know how to cook. But my brother was so spoilt. What he did was to be present at the dining table for every meal. One day the women will boycott the kitchen (laugh)".*

Vel narrowed this cultural association of a woman's place in the kitchen to the religious paradigm, and commented,

> *"I still believed that even though you get your Ph.D., when you're at home you're still a wife, you still have to go to the kitchen (laugh). I think it goes back to our religion. Our duty is to serve the husband. So I guess part of it comes from that".*

My position as a woman who is attempting to obtain a Ph.D. degree had been used as a measurement that well-educated women in general should not consider education as a way to ignore the natural requirement for women to do the cooking. Thus the kitchen could be an 'appropriate' place for women.

The above cultural perspective established the place of employed women at home. Four interviewees boldly stated that an ideal mother and wife was a woman who stayed at home, cared for the family, possessed more compassionate attributes such as tolerance and patience, as well as femininity (as opposed to their rough engineering world). Also in the UK, research has shown that women still think of themselves as the natural carers in the home and for children [Arber. 1993a: Evetts. 2000].

However, there were also women who would like to disassociate their place in the kitchen but could not do so. Jaida confided in me, *"Doing domestic work? I would not say that I enjoy doing it. It is more like the responsibility, I feel responsible to do so I have to do. It is not like I dislike doing it but at the same time it is not like I enjoy doing it (laugh). It's difficult to say".* Some interviewees sensed that they were 'forcing' themselves to do domestic work. They do not like doing it, yet they have to because they believe domestic work is their 'job'. Despite 'being forced' to do domestic chores at home, they may still think it is necessary to accept it, as respondents 9 said, *"Being a woman, it is very natural for us to do these things (the domestic works). It's our family and home, after all. You just have to do it despite your liking or not".* Most participants were inclined to accept the conventional idea of

women's roles at home because it is prescribed by society as aligned to females' natural attributes.

The conventional view is strong among Malays in which morality is still regarded as indispensable to society [Stivens. 2000: Wazir-Jahan. 1998]. However, there is also evidence of reorienting this moral conservatism, which promoted the revolutionised idea of women's roles at home. Widyan had a different explanation altogether of this particular proverb that established the kitchen as a woman's place. She blamed this on the Malaysian patriarchal social system that misplaced the position of women to the advantage of men. She even regarded this practice as non-Islamic. According to her,

> *"What we practice is **wrong**. Actually it should not be like that. Cooking is in fact men's duty. It is one of men's responsibilities in taking care of the family and home. Men should provide domestic help to the wives even though if the wives are full time housewives, so that they should never be over burdened with work at home. **But our culture puts it the other way around. Society only emphasised on whatever seemed to benefit the men.** They will use religious laws if that would benefit men. They might change it to the traditional culture if that benefits men. So in the end, women are seen to hold more responsibilities at home. This is **not right** at all. This is **not Islamic** at all". [* My highlight]*

Briefly, what she was trying to say was that gender inequality in the workplace and at home remain unquestioned due to the patriarchal structure of society. The interpretation of women's role at home and work is greatly justified by the cultural traditions that define the interests of men. If certain things such as money would be to their benefit, men would agree that their women could work. However, if work outside the home meant that men have to share doing household chores, then they might oppose work for women. Widyan's words illustrated how patriarchal traditions, which were seen as non-Islamic, were used over women.

If Widyan had looked at it from a micro familial scenario, Rayyan, a Government officer, saw the authority of patriarchal elements from a macro national level. Although she could also see some improvements had been made to achieve better conditions for women in the country, especially in the workforce, politics and religion, she added,

> *"Just looked at the previous developmental plans and projects initiated by the Government before. There was no awareness about issues on women and gender at all. But now we can see some improvements, gradually things have started to change".*

If the country is said to have started to change its governmental implementation for the betterment of women, what is the supposed new

status of women in the household? Does a patriarchal element still act as a dominating way to restrain a woman in her own home? The answers may rely on the subsequent discussion below, which examines marital relationships between couples.

The Social Status of the Wife and Husband in the Household

The traditional gender ideology dictates that the most important role for a Malay woman is still as the supportive wife [Rohana. 1997a]. A modern career woman should give up her job, which she enjoys, when her husband is financially able to support the family or when her husband asks her to [Nik Safiah. 1992]. Similarly, housework is still the wife's domain even when she is holding a full-time job outside the home [Raja Rohani. 1991]. Inequal sharing of household chores still persists even in the UK [Pahl. 1991].

A question, *"working can promote equality between women and their husbands"* in the questionnaire has a great importance for this study. Is there any social stigma for women in working? What is the relation of the patriarchal system in the Malaysian context and how does it affect women? More than one-third of the respondents disagreed that women could achieve an equal status with men if they were working. Although this statement referred to the social value attached to a concept of equality, respondent number 186 stated, *"women can never be equal to their husband but at least we should have a fair relationship"*. Her response might be looked at from the physical factors possessed by men. Physically, men in general are stronger than women. However, it should not be a decisive factor in treating women unequally in their private lives, when they were also economic contributors.

Earlier studies had linked the correlation of physical, social, cultural and economic supremacy of mankind over womankind [Rosaldo and Lamphere. 1974]. Even when being physically strong and sturdily built, women could never achieve equality with men. However in recent years, gender discussion was not about physical strength anymore but about having fair treatment at home and at work that would create a healthy atmosphere between both partners [Anderson. 2000]. However, this situation is less likely to materialise if others still pursue traditional expectations of a woman,

particularly a working woman, as wife, mother, employee, daughter, sister or even daughter-in-law.

I asked the Government officer about the need for women and men to be equal to each other. She asked me in return,

> *"What is equality? Equality in what sense? Equality in a perspective of Malaysia is tremendously different from equality from a western perspective. People over there are fighting for equality without particular directions. For example if men have muscle they want muscle too. They thought muscle is a symbol of strength. As a result more women are seen becoming muscular. Clearly this is against our religion, our tradition. Men and women should have a clear-cut distinction between them".*
> [Rayyan]

Her strong antagonistic sentiment had not exactly answered my question. What I really wanted to know was the degree of gender equality between both sexes in Malaysia. What is women's position compared to men? Where do they feel equal, where do they feel satisfied in life? I immediately restructured the question on male superiority in society. Rayyan then admitted,

> *"Men in Malaysia are a bit superior. Before, the Government wasn't even aware of the issues of women and gender in the development programmes and planning. Every project was about men and for men. Looked at the poverty alleviating programmes in the 50s and 60s, nothing about women and for women at all. At least we can see positive actions now. In fact the establishment of this ministry is meant entirely for women. So gradually we (in the ministry) can change the situation. One of the objectives in this ministry is to create a sense of superiority in men as well as in women. Maybe in some aspects men should be in front and in other aspects women should be pushed forward".*

This quotation has a significant implication for this study. Rayyan has provided a historical record of the programmes undertaken by the Malaysian Government to get women involved in the nation's development. She verified that Malaysian women were neglected before (and immediately after) Independence. As time went by, there was a demonstration of gradual but certain progress for women.

As a Government officer, Rayyan has both public and private voices. The former quotation saw Rayyan's personal view on women's equality based on physical appearance. But she later used her public governmental voice that saw women's equality based on the social responsibility of the Government towards women. She admitted the effects of male dominance in society, and also said that improvements to minimise the gender problem are generated in stages. But at the very end of her response she was also voicing the Government recognition of a man's place in certain areas of life while

separating women. It was my mistake in not asking her to expand the issue, or at least to provide clear examples of it. However, guessing from the overall interview session with her, I sensed the traditional value of her perspective that separates women and men in each distinctive 'fitting' place.

In the questionnaire I asked about the attitude of female employees towards home and children. It was designed in a way to understand the life expectation aimed for by these working respondents. Eighty per cent agreed that having a job was acceptable, but establishing a home and having children were what they really wanted in life. Only 7 per cent of the respondents disagreed with that statement. Respondent 2 gave her opinion on the matter when she wrote, *"I always wanted to be at home, to be with family, but (it is) mainly based on individuals and what they want out of their life. If the woman is happy and feels the satisfaction she seeks in life by staying at home, so be it".*

Miza's case was very unique. Even though she was just been working five months with the company, she said that she would definitely quit her job once her working contract[75] had expired, because she wanted to dedicate herself to home, husband and caring for the children.

> *"Frankly speaking I do not want to work. The main reason I work is because PetCo sponsored me, and I have to serve my 7-year contract. I'm not interested to work but I'm more interested to concentrate on family". [* My highlight]*

Apparently, a total abandonment of work for family (as in the case above) still exists. Some women are unselfishly dedicating their lives for the benefit of others. The attitude of the participants in this study could be considered to be altruism, concern for the welfare of others rather than oneself. In this study, altruism was attributed to the work of Comte, who saw the evolution of society towards humanistic values [Lenzer. 1983], in which maternal behaviour has the effect of taking care of one's kin [Rushton and Sorrentino. 1981].

An altruistic attitude is enhanced by the cultural expectations in Malaysia, which is that the main place of women and mothers should be in a secure private domain of home with the family. To explain this situation, the work of Noraini [2001] on women's religiosity with their altruistic attitude was

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75 Most PetCo's engineers were sponsored students who are by the terms of their contract, are bonded to seven years working with the company. Failure to obey the contract may force them to face a full repayment of their study expenditure.

relevantly important, in which she demonstrated that the beliefs in religion, to some extent, might help women in coping with the difficulties of life. Religion reduced the impact of stress and prevented the psychological distress that might result from stressful experience [Idler. 1987].

When I asked in the interview, *"If there is a clash of priority between work and home, which place would you choose?"* married female engineers expressed quitting the job more often than the single ones. The working perspective between the married and single female workers might be different due to the involvement of a different set of family members – the married ones with their immediate nuclear family and the singles with their family of origin. Still, when the same question was asked of the unmarried interviewees, they usually said that the family was so dear to them and they might quit work, if the clash persisted.

The dilemma of choosing either home or a career, which was important to some women, would be a dramatic event in their life. As a direct result of this phenomenon, Jamilah [1994b] has reported that women with high levels of education are more likely to remain unmarried compared with those with little or no schooling. This scenario may have an implicit effect that reveals their actual uneasiness towards having a double-burden responsibility. Many newspaper articles have recently reported little interest among the singles in getting married. One of the reasons quoted was being 'afraid' of the domestic responsibility waiting them at home [The New Straits Times. 4th December 2001: 10th November 2001].

In brief, the specificity of cultural values is sustained even combined with the strong influence of industrialisation and the globalisation process. Women are involved in the labour force, but their perception towards home and family still has not changed a lot. In addition, when some of them thought that a career was a thing they pursue in life, marriage tended to be delayed. It may be difficult for women to excel in both spheres.

Narrowing the discussion to find the main reasons behind this clash of conflict, I asked my participants about their situations at home. What are their husbands' attitudes towards housework?

Husbands at Home

Even though the questionnaire had not reached the hands of the husbands, how the wives described their husbands' help with domestic life would still be relevant. Previous studies have done the same [Edgell. 1980: Gershuny et. al. 1994: Jowell et. al. 1988: Martin and Roberts. 1984: Oakley. 1974: Pahl. 1984]. Although it is not the main interest of this research, knowing the participation of the respondents' husband at home would disclose trends in household management.

The earliest research from Rapoport and Rapoport [1978: 1976] has indicated that although the sexual division of labour in the house might not be as strong as it once was, domestic work was not apportioned equally between partners. Recently, Crompton and Harris [1999a: 1999b] also found the same effect, in which there is no equivalent impact on men's domestic contribution at home, even when women work full time. The lack of men's help in the household increased when someone else was paid to do the bulk of the housework [Halford et. al. 1997]. Wajcman [1996] studied the weekly routines of housework in Britain, and reported that even in dual-career households, women were more likely to shoulder domestic work and childcare than their partners. They have to hire a home-helper to do the basic cleaning in the house. In this study, hiring an outside help heightened the lack of husbands' co-operation at home. Alya said,

> *"My husband used to help me with the house chores but when we have a maid, he just leaves everything to me and the maid".*

In other cases, husbands were just not interested in the housework because they simply took things for granted – that the wives, with the help of the house helpers, were there to manage the home. Vel said,

> *"He's not helping. But the strange thing is that when I'm not around he'll take care of the whole house, he cares for the children, he cooks, and sometimes he hangs the clothes outside, cleans the house. But once I'm at home, it's like I'm in charge now (laugh)".*

On the other hand, when a husband participated at home, usually his involvement was away from the kitchen. The separation of domestic tasks based on areas in the house determined that the kitchen was a female area, whereas other parts of the house were shared between the couples. Syaza cited this task separation at home vividly. The responsibility for housework

and childcare was wholly hers and she carried out the domestic tasks with the help of a paid housekeeper.

> *"Let say if I want him to clean the fan, wipe the glass of the lights or the lamps' shades, sweep the garage, play with the children, I can ask my husband to do that but definitely not for washing plates and kitchen utensils. The way he was brought up was awful. My mother-in-law is a full time housewife. So she never asked her sons to do anything in the kitchen. At the end my husband was never comfortable to do kitchen chores at all. So now I have to manage household chores with my helper".*

The root of the problem seems to stem from the men's upbringing, and as a result, some men are less adaptive to the need to change. The unfair familial structure affected the relationship of the working couple in the East compared with the West [Stockman et. al. 1995]. The respondents were asked to describe their husband's interest in helping them to do the housework. The most frequent answer rested on the fourth response that *"he might help you when you are busy or engaged with other things"* (30 per cent). The next most frequent answer was the third response, in which the husband did some housework, but less than the wife (28 per cent).

However, when marital status is included, 28 per cent of the married respondents admitted that their husbands do less housework than them, and 29 per cent said that their husbands only help in the household when they were busy with other things. More than 11 per cent married respondents said that their husbands do little housework, and 4 per cent of said that their husbands did not do any housework. Malaysian husbands in general still retained the traditionalist outlook that household work is a wife's job. See Table 17.

Table 17: The Percentage of Husband's Participation in Housework (Question 50 in the Questionnaire) by Marital Status

Question Statements (Total 100%)	Single (%)	Married (%)	Separated (but Still Married) (%)	Widowed (%)
He undertakes most of the housework	-	2.8	-	-
He equally shares the housework with you	0.6	22.2	-	-
He does some housework but less than you are	-	28.4	-	-
He might help you when you are busy or engaged with things	-	29.0	-	0.6
He does little housework	0.6	11.4	0.6	-
He does almost no housework	-	4.0	-	-

Damia described her father's nonchalant attitude at home.

> *"I had never seen him in the kitchen preparing foods or taking over tending the children from my mum. For my dad, women should be in the kitchen, women have to do*

everything (i.e. at home). Everything must be ready (once he arrived home). He only knew that he's served. Sometimes he didn't even carry groceries (which he bought) to the kitchen. He just asked my mum and us (i.e. the children) to get them from the car. What he wanted was, his coffee while reading newspapers in the living room".

This supremacy of the patriarch figure is sustained throughout generations in most Malaysian families, particular among the Malays. Damia's life experience was a good example of how cultural traditions were practised before and still are being practised even today. The traditional position of the husband-father maintained social, cultural and economic dominance over females and younger family members.

This traditionalist male figure still survives, although most recently there is an emerging trend of women who do not approve of it. The negative implication of this traditionally male dominance is much greater than before, as women at this present time also go out to work and earn a living. Consequently, it is found in many cases that despite the fact that their wives also work outside the home to earn cash for the family, husbands still believe that their job stops after office hours and they should have their rest. The notion of equal sharing in domestic affairs was not very popular, at least among the respondents' husbands in this study. The male spouse might participate in certain tasks, such as buying groceries, mopping the floor and tending children while the wife was cooking, but most of the domestic tasks were done and completed by the respondent herself or paid help.

Virtually, every society assumes that responsibility for home and children is the women's [Arber. 1993a: Brannen and Moss. 1988]. From the questionnaire data, 70 per cent of the respondents agreed that their husbands left all the burdens of household and childcare on them. Respondent 211 wrote, *"Malay husbands do not do this (i.e. the housework), of course"*; briefly saying that participating in the household management was less preferred by the Malay husbands. In a specific elaboration, respondent 186 had freely written on the questionnaire, *"(the housework) is the husband's responsibility but normally he will push it to his wife. The wife has to do everything"*. It is understood that the areas of the husbands' responsibility are wide, and do include doing the household chores, but these are unabashedly ignored by the husbands.

Additionally, respondent 330 elaborated her opinion from an Islamic standpoint. She wrote, *"From an Islamic view, the wife should only act as the prize possession to her husband. Even though she is working, the husband should provide the house helper at home like what my husband does. But most Malay husbands do not understand this"*. Although her comprehension of "a wife as a prize possession to the husband" was highly debatable, this study needs to clarify that her perception of men's greater role at home was in fact derived from the teaching of Islam. There is a *hadith*[76] (Prophet's saying) that emphasised men's obligation in the running of the household. But this *hadith* has never been made popular in Malaysian society.

As most respondents have clearly pointed out, it was unmistakable that the cultural traditions, especially of the Malays, with regard to the household arrangements were definitely patriarchal in nature. The effect of Islam has been singled out as the determining factor, which influenced respondents' lives. Conversely, there is no single interpretation of gender in Islamic debate [Sa'diyya. 2001]. The Islamic principle recognises the status of a wife as a partner to a husband, and most of her housekeeping jobs are done due to her willingness. However, this utopian home environment is not the practice among the majority of Malay families. The influence of patriarchal elements in reinforcing the status of the husband-father as the head of the family weakens the position of other members of the family, especially the status of the wife-mother. Alya remarked,

> *"Husband? My husband does not help at all (laugh), especially when we have a maid. When we still didn't hire her, my husband helps a bit but when we got one, he just doesn't involve himself at all. He dedicates himself to his work. Usually he goes to work at early morning and comes home late. When our helper is ill, I am the one who takes a leave. He never does that. His work comes first (laugh). As long as the home is well tended, he is quite happy".*

Assuming that there is a tendency for husbands to regard themselves as the breadwinner of the family, they believe that they need to concentrate on their career while leaving the responsibility of domestic work, or caring for children to the wife (and maid). They actually ignored the fact that their spouse is also working outside home. This situation is ironic when on the one hand, men agreed to the idea of having working wives because this means a bigger family income, but the other hand, they may still believe that

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[76] *Hadith* is the second source of Islamic jurisprudence after the Qur'an.

the household tasks are solely the wives' responsibility, thus less are interested in sharing the burden together.

Previous academic studies on housework management have suggested that husbands should start to have an interest in domestic affairs [Beneria and Stimpson. 1987: Drew et. al. 1998: Giovannini. 1998: Ward. 1963], yet so far not many concrete improvements have been seen in Malaysia. It is a clear fact that most Malay husbands are unlikely to get involved in any domestic jobs at home.

Women's hopes for more domestic participation from the males are high. Seventy-six per cent of the married employed women wanted more husbands' participation in the household. However, this study also found that there was a group of women who were less enthusiastic about relinquishing housework and childcare responsibilities to their husbands. As respondent 361 wrote, *"She (i.e. the working married woman) should try. If unable (then) she should best get the house helper. She should not leave the domestic jobs to her husband"*. This phenomenon was incongruous compared with earlier observations, which hoped for the male spouse's participation in domestic management.

The paradoxical aspect of wanting and not wanting men's involvement in domestic life required further justification. What were the reasons that made them respond differently to a particular circumstance at home? I then posed a set of questions in the questionnaire on the husband's participation in household tasks. Is this something to do with cultural traditions?

Husbands' Participation in the Household Chores

In order to understand what kind of housework the husbands usually do, one particular question has been arranged to itemise some common household tasks such as washing, cleaning, cooking and shopping for groceries in the household.

Based on the findings, washing kitchen utensils, cleaning the house, washing clothes and cooking, were the less preferred tasks among the husbands. This was a classic pattern for men all over the world, including the UK [Jowell and Airey. 1985]. However, a recent British household trend

showed that washing up after meals has been singled out as having improved among British men [Anderson et. al. 1994]. In this study, 65 per cent of the respondents said that the husbands were less willing to wash up. Additionally, 59 per cent of the husbands were less willing to clean the house, wash the clothes (50 per cent) and do some cooking (55 per cent). On the other hand, shopping for the groceries was considered the favourite chore among the husbands. Sixty per cent of the respondents said that most of the time their husbands would buy groceries for the family. The same phenomenon has happened in the UK and US [Dex and Shaw. 1986].

The attitude of Malay husbands towards domestic chores tends to favour the conventional view. They were less willing to be involved in housework. Most of the time, they leave the matters concerning home affairs to their wives. Respondent 209 elaborated, *"where on earth to get a Malay husband who is willing to do the domestic chores. My husband will not"*. The study might conclude that the idea of husband doing household chores is still an alien concept among Malays.

So far, this study has identified the male spouse as being disinclined to participate in domestic affairs. However, in narrowing down the discussion, this study understood one particular reason that discouraged men from participation in domestic life. Women felt it was ultimately their responsibility to see that homes were clean and comfortable for all the family. A few interviewees knew that it was their standards of cleanliness and presentation that determined whether tasks were done. Cael elaborated,

> *"Vacuuming is a tough job that my husband does. But somehow it is always me who ended up completing the job, because when he did, I found it unsatisfactorily. I still could see dust everywhere"*.

Respondent 249 also wrote, *"I do not allow my husband to do it (i.e. the housework) as the quality of his housework is not up to my standard"*. In the end, she was left to do all the housework. A previous cross-national study that included Norway, Britain and the Czech Republic, examined by Crompton and Harris [1999a], also found the same possessive attitude towards domestic affairs among married employed women.

Apparently, the issue of domestic choices in the Malaysian household is a complex matter. There were at least two separate aspects that could be explored here. Firstly, it seemed the respondents tended to say that the

house management should be on the woman's shoulder. Secondly, they appeared to emphasise the quality of the housework completion should be in accordance to their standard. In short, husbands might be blamed for not showing any interest in doing domestic work, and if they do, they might also be blamed for not doing it the right way. The seemingly self-imposed limitation has restrained them from getting domestic help from their husbands.

Conclusion

There are two broad pictures of the effect of cultural traditions in Malaysia. The first picture of this country adopts the notion that 'nothing changes'. It shows the orthodoxy of religion and the inflexibility of the traditional customs that rigidly rejects any elements of change from the 'contaminated' Western ideas. The second picture conveys the notion that 'everything changes'. It reflects the transformation of religious jurisdictions in agreeing contemporary human needs, the removal of religious fundamentalists that only suppress the progress of Muslims and the acceptance of modernised perspectives in gender relations.

The responses in this study so far can neither be entirely explained from the first picture nor the second one. Malaysia is changing and everyday lives are varying. Its women receive education up to the highest level and they are urged to participate in the labour force, thus they eventually reorient their perspective in accordance to modernisation. From the discussion, one may assume that Malaysian women today are far from being recognised as secondary citizens with their independent, assertive and modernised thinking, yet in certain situations they are also generally less open, less expressive, more inhibited and timid [Noraini. 2001].

This study could not under estimate the power of cultural traditions in Malaysia. The acceptance of conventional views and the recognition of modernised perspectives exist side by side. Apparently, the modernised version of looking at life is trying to filter through the traditional boundary. Whenever interviewees expressed agreement with the conventional perspective, they might actually believe differently, as they did not want to show unexpected attitudes about cultural traditions in this study. However,

every now and then their responses flowed unchecked, in which they blurted out their conflicting perspectives about being conventional, which acknowledged cultural traditions, and being modernised, which attacked cultural injustices to women. This study envisages that women are inclined to perceive the latter perspective. However, they emphasised the former perspective, because they feared that they might disrupt the 'normality of the situation' of the Malaysian context. For example, most interviewees endured the manipulation of male dominance and accepted it as a norm. One aspect that reinforced this situation was due to the interviewees' altruistic attitude towards cultural traditions, particularly when it involved the family and home. This phenomenon was fortified by a pervasive societal cultural influence, despite the political force removing the more obvious discrimination against women.

This chapter discussed traditional elements of the family structure in an industrialising nation. Despite the significant changes in the Malaysian economy, many traditional elements still remain. The respect for elders was still a paramount virtue in Malaysian society. As illustrated before, a majority of people in this country still took care of the elderly members of the society themselves. Moreover, the belief in God and religion was still strong and became a principle of life. Muslims in particular would make an effort to emulate things based on the religious paradigm. Finally, a continual strength of extended family ties was maintained even when the family form has become a nuclear one. The Malaysian family was seen as still extended in orientation and strength to the kin and community. The importance of family networking in Malaysia is maintained. Although people may live far away from the family of origin, kinship ties are still felt. They ensured to go back home to see their parents and in-laws. They also felt responsible about the financial and social well being of their siblings, especially those who were still at school.

It is therefore important to stress that traditional belief and practices are still strong in Malaysia. Kahn [1998] has seen the peculiarity of Asian values[77], which were still being preserved, even with strong pressure coming from

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[77] Within the Malaysian context, these Asian values could be translated into the religious and traditional cultures of the society.

various social forces. Industrialisation did change Malaysian women to a certain extent, for instance, their increased participation in the employment sector, but in other aspects related to home and family, they still adopted the traditional values. Cultural traditions have changed throughout time, but their changes have arrived in a subtle manner, which have not upset the order of Malaysian society.

This chapter assessed the dominance of cultural traditions over women in the areas of workplace and home in Malaysia. The next chapter concludes that the changing traditional social structure is lagging behind the rapid transformation of the country - another paradoxical circumstance, which is the basic theme of this study.

Introduction

My study has attempted to provide an account of the current paradoxical situation of women in Malaysia with respect to their position in the workforce and home. Specifically, I looked at the lives of the professional women in the petroleum industry in Malaysia. How do they manage this double burden? My participants seemed to face difficulties in both places. However, when a crisis of prioritising occurs, they normally choose family work. Patriarchal elements still continue in Malaysia, particularly in the private domain of home and family.

In line with the objectives of the research, I identified a number of constraints that restricted the involvement of women in economic activities. Among them are:

- The dual and often competing responsibilities of family and career restrict the mobility and participation of women in the labour market, and demonstrate women's orientation towards family responsibilities rather than paid work.

- Some patriarchal elements in Malaysia that derive from culture and religion downplay women's contribution to economic development.

- Social prejudices, together with the altruistic attitude of women regarding the role and status of women in employment and at home limit their involvement in economic activities.

- In general, employed women experience unfair wife-husband roles in household management. The wives' position as a significant financial contributor to the family does not award them equal status with their husbands. The husbands are always regarded as the head of the family holding the power to make major family decisions.

- Due to their family orientation, female engineers have difficulty making advances in the male dominated engineering field.

Reflecting back to the discussion, what follows will re-visit the sub-headings used in Chapter Two.

Women's Work Orientation

Work is generally considered as activities to do with pay [Dex. 1988: Drew et. al. 1998: Jenson et. al. 1988: Pahl. 1989: Parker. 1983]. For most women, particularly married ones, the notion of 'work' refers to any working activity, which is done with both paid work of the workplace and unpaid work at home.

Glucksmann's TSOL identifies that 'work' for women should be looked at from its totality that encompasses both market work and household work [Glucksmann. 1995]. Although TSOL conceives of market and household economies of Western industrial societies as two spheres, it also emphasises the importance of focussing upon the *"articulation of the systems that are distinct but not autonomous"* [Glucksmann. 1995; 68]. It means that we can acknowledge the relationship between work and home without having to develop separate analyses of the two spheres. She argues that, *"inequalities are not solely generated within each sphere but are rather an effect of the connection between two"* [Glucksman. 1995; 68]. This connection therefore accepts the interdependent nature of the two spheres. As a consequence, the TSOL advocates a need to conceive of the *"way inequalities are produced in each spheres by the overall structures, and also to achieve a more adequate conception of interdependency"* [Glucksman. 1995; 68].

My study would like to endorse Glucksman's urge to reanalyse the relationship between the public workplace and the private home sphere to minimise gender inequalities. However, the TSOL concept is highly challenged in the Malaysian traditional household. Based on cultural expectations, domestic work is understood to be the female's responsibility, which she is expected to do willingly. Briefly, it is difficult to justify Glucksman's TSOL concept in the Malaysian context because its women would normally like to receive societal endorsement, which identifies domestic chores solely for them. Moreover, members of society might ridicule men who do domestic jobs[78].

Based on my study, the issue of women's work orientation among the participants seemed to incline towards family work, which indeed fitted in

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[78] Normally, a traditional man would abstain from doing domestic jobs because he would not endure the social ridicule that his wife dictated him, which meant that he has no power in the family. The infamous notion of the "queen control" referred to a husband who lost his status as the leader-head of the family to his wife.

with previous studies on women's work orientation in Malaysia [Jamilah. 2001: 1999: 1994a: 1992c: Nik Safiah. 1992: Rohana. 1988].

In other studies based on ethnicity, Malay respondents are overwhelmingly found to possess the most traditional views concerning women's positions and roles in society [Jamilah. 1993]. They expressed higher agreement for a woman's career being secondary to her family roles, compared to the Chinese and Indians [Lim. 1990: Kaur. 2000: 1986]. Additionally, Malaysian women regardless of ethnic group agreed that professional women should worry over their 'wife' and 'mother' skills [Jamilah. 1993]. In fact, they believed that society's problems could be blamed on mothers working full-time outside of their homes [Jamilah. 1999].

The findings of my study found that pregnancy and children were the main factors that hindered interviewees in advancing in their professional career. Marriage was socially sanctioned, pregnancy was awaited following the marriage, and children would naturally complete the family structure. This normal sanction of society might increase a dilemma in choosing between family and career among professionals in particular.

Following Hakim's preference theory on women's work orientations, my participants demonstrated a typical criteria of the 'home-centred' group [Hakim. 2000] showing that their life paradigm is more centred on home and family rather than work and career, a conclusion which is also shared by recent Malaysian studies [Jamilah. 2001: Noraini. 2001].

Women's Paid Work and Family Work

I observed that the separation of the 'private' family work from the 'public' paid work is the product of social expectation about traditional gender roles. For example, the notion of the male breadwinner in Malaysia rests on men's responsibility to earn money for the family, while women's responsibility is to care for the family [Rohana. 1997a]. However, there is no literature that systematically discusses the concept of the male breadwinner in the Malaysian dual-earner household. Many studies have cited how the female partner is more reminded of her obligation to the home than the male by

society [Aminah and Narimah. 1992: Jamilah. 2001: Rohana. 1997a: Wazir-Jahan. 1998].

Unsurprisingly, the feminine dilemma of the dual roles arose. Most women with a family faced the "second shift" phenomenon [Hochschild and Machung. 1989]. In fact, my study shared Jamilah's finding [2001] that the traditional female responsibility for household work among the respondents has not considerably worn away, and the male participation has not significantly increased. Though the Malaysian household has increasingly expected a wife's financial contribution, she is also expected to participate in the household management, normally on her own, while her husband usually is given an excuse by society [Jamilah. 2001]. By contrast, European men are seen more as being involved at home [Drew et. al. 1998]

Thus, Hochschild's notion of "stalled revolution" [1990] actually corresponded with my finding, whereby participants were increasingly moved into the male dominated sphere of employment, yet their husbands were not increasingly engaged in the unpaid domestic work. Alya said,

> *"Most men are like that (i.e. they don't do housework). I think it's a trend. They cannot be bothered with the domestic works. There is no difference whether they are married or not. They can go on with their normal routine. But when women got married, they have to change a lot, especially to manage time and work at home and the workplace".*

This scenario implicated the participants' perception of their careers. A minority of my participants verified that they were experiencing the same "second shift" phenomenon as described by Hochschild and Machung [1989]. As one respondent wrote,

> *"I think most women with the family here feel a bit stressed with the insufficient time and lots of work. It is stressful when you know that once you've done the job at the office, there will be another job is waiting at home."*

Additionally, some of my interviewees also shared the phenomenon of Hochschild's "reversal world" [1997], whereby they conceded that home was not a restful place and the workplace was not so frantic. Piah, who was a single engineer, verified the statement. She said, *"I like working. I once imagined that it would be enjoyable to bring mattress and pillow to the office so that I don't have to come in and out the office. (On the other hand) I will have a severe headache if I only am at home".* I also found that my participants considered that the workplace liberated them from routinised domestic work at home. Imani, who was married with three children said, *"I have to work, I just cannot be at home only, I need to be outside too. Don't*

get me wrong, I love my family but I just can't stand the situation to do the domestic works for 24-hour. It is just not I". Indeed in this case, my participants experienced the "reversal world" phenomenon, which is known to employed women in the US. A few women, regardless of whether they are married or single saw, domestic work as uninteresting, which redefined the workplace from a chaotic place to a haven.

Apparently, most participants were struggling to manage both spheres. Nevertheless, they would not consider quitting a job and becoming full time housewives. In fact, some of them considered that household chores were the most unappreciated work, which required a full commitment, but with no satisfying compensation in terms of a material reward or emotional state. Furthermore, unlike the work in the office that could be done in a certain time, household work seemed to be never ending. Uzma said, *"At home, I don't do housework only. It is just not I. It's very unchallenging. It's really enjoyable if I have quality time with whatever it is (i.e. domestic task) but when it comes to be a routine, it is boring and tiring. You will have no chance to stop and rest".*

However, their views represented a minority group of my research participants. Although the majority of them substantiated the dullness of housework, they still emphasised the importance of home and family.

Women, Work and the Family

In principle, granting equal access to women and men will only benefit certain women – those whose cultures, experiences, family circumstances and share domestic responsibilities are similar to those men as a group [Rees. 1998]. The concept of 'equality'[79] seems to ignore the impact of patriarchy in the home and at the workplace, which systematically disadvantaged women.

Due to women's disadvantageous conditions, female workers have the least bargaining power and thus are the most vulnerable to fluctuations in labour demand. In her study on gender issues in Western women, Walby [1997] found that new forms of inequality have accompanied the increase of opportunities for women in Europe and the US. For example, the world still

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[79] The concept of 'equality' is fundamentally refers to that no individual should have fewer human rights or opportunities than any other individuals [Rees. 1998].

appears to seek cheap female labour, even though there are increased numbers of highly educated skilled female workers [Walby. 2001].

Various sources demonstrated the predicaments such as discrimination, pregnancy and other domestic commitments that hinder women in pursuing the highest ladder in their careers [Arber and Gilbert. 1992: Arnup et. al. 1990: Barret. 2001: Collinson. 1988: Corti. et. al. 1995: Dex et. al. 1993: Spencer and Podmore. 1987]. The same predicaments are also affecting Malaysian women [Amriah. 1993], which were correspondingly displayed in my study. My interviewees' career opportunities were blocked by childcare and domestic commitments, as well as by the demand for continuous work experiences and management attitudes.

Moreover, my women were seemed to be uninterested in going further in their career, because they were avoiding greater job responsibilities at work, which would have meant that they would have little time at home.

Women's Employment in Industrialised yet Patriarchal Malaysia

I considered the continuation of the traditional patriarchal elements in Malaysia in the life of my participants. Patriarchy generates an unequal power in gender relations. "Private patriarchy" occurs inside a secluded area of home such as through arranged marriages, dowries and domestic labour, whereas "public patriarchy" happens outside the home through education and the labour market [Walby. 1990]. Arranged marriages are diminishing in Malaysia, yet domestic labour is still considered a woman's job. I referred to some patriarchal elements that enable men to be dominant in both – the workplace and home.

I linked some patriarchal traces to the influence of religion and *adat* with the family structure in Malaysia. The women in my study seemingly accepted the patriarchal elements in life. These attitudes were a reflection of childhood experiences, and in particular, parental encouragement to accept the supposedly appropriate roles accepted by society [Manderson. 1983: Taylor. 1985]. It remains as the fundamental element throughout generations in Malaysia, particularly within the Malay family structure. Conflicts of generations were derived from people's upbringing and socialisation. The

traditional position of a husband-father gave men the power to dominate in terms of social, cultural and economic aspects over females and the younger family members.

However in my study, I also discovered that the interviewees often debated and rejected or approved new roles and new morals to adapt to their existing situation. They negotiate and redefine new female roles and identities within changing social lives and conflicting ideologies that give them freedom in action. Nonetheless, when I asked about their relationship with their husbands, my interviewees expressed their opinions, but at the same time made it clear that the final decisions are left to their husbands (or prospective husbands). It seems that as long as they clearly state that decision-making is up to the husband, they feel free to have their own opinions and probably voice them as well. While negotiating new roles, it seems a tacit agreement that they do not openly challenge male authority. Once this is recognised, new patterns of women's behaviour may be tolerated.

In relation to the patriarchal elements in Malaysia, I found that most interviewees recognised the status of their husbands as the head of the family, even in cases when they were not the sole breadwinners. Traditional gender ideology dictates that the most important role for Malaysian women is still the supportive wife. This is upheld by the responses that an employed woman should give up job when her husband disallowed working, or when her husband was financially able to support the family. It is also shown here that housework is still the wife's domain, even when she is holding a full time job the outside home. In brief, an equal sharing of household chores is less to be seen in a Malaysian household than in the West.

The influence of social sanctions that women should be at home and be the guardian of morality was strongly preserved. The picture of the husbands' earner status and the wives' carer position stuck to people's framework. My study showed that employed women excused their husband on several grounds; namely their masculine gender, their high commitment to employment, their responsibility for bread winning and their lack of skill in caring and doing household work. Normally, criticism of their husbands was

retracted and they blatantly contradicted themselves, or often they balanced out negotiating negative comments with approving remarks.

During the interviews I got the impression that the participants had to deal with the discrepancy between the conservative ideology of gender roles and the behavioural practices of the dual earner lifestyle. In this case, women would rather reveal the ideal rather than the real, because any negative expressions about their domestic 'obligation' might reflect a failure on their part.

Interviews were conducted according to normative assumptions concerning the disclosure of information and the conduct of interpersonal relationships. In the conduct of their marriages, women are expected to be loyal to their partners and not let them down by revealing their deficiencies to others outside the marriage [Westwood. 1984]. However, this situation is not to suggest that interviewees were particularly protective of their marriages when confronted. Rather, the issue was one of disclosure concerning the normative emphasis upon happiness in marriage [Brannen. 1992]. Married women in general placed a higher value on emotional sharing and togetherness in their relationships with their partners than they did in the practical division of labour in the household. In the event of worries and supports, husbands were mentioned as close confidants. Expectations of emotional support from husbands reverberate with ideologies of love. According to Lawson [1989], marriage is defined at the level of altruism. Consequently, any differences and inequalities, power and self-interest were excluded.

Religion and Culture in Women's Employment in a Multi-ethnic Malaysia

The legacy of some patriarchal elements in the Malaysian social structure was based on religion and *adat*. Cultural inhibitions, such as the belief that a woman's primary role is in the home, or that women must take second place to men at the workplace, are still strong [Noraini. 2001].

Although there was no obvious resistance to women's participation in the development of the country, societal expectations of the Malaysian traditional culture for women to stay with the family are strong. The 'rightful' place of

Malaysian women is at home because they are the "guardian of morality" [Rohana. 1997a: Wazir-Jahan. 1998]. Family issues in Malaysia are highly politicised by the media and politicians. The debates were about the implications of women going out to work, and about the pressures and costs of juggling work and home that deteriorated familial values in Malaysia [Aminah and Narimah. 1992: Jamilah and Louis. 2001].

Before Independence in 1957, many national development programmes did not benefit women, due to the accepted notion of the male breadwinner [Ismail and Saha. 1993: Jamilah. 1992b: Jamilah. 1994a: Rokiah. 1996: Sha'bah. 1997]. However, the process of colonialism and industrialism transformed women's situation in Malaysia [Malaysia. 2002: Malaysia. 2001a: 1981]. The economy of Malaysia since independence has been characterised with the evolution away from an agricultural mode to its increasingly industrialised forms, particularly in the manufacturing, service and professional sectors. The increasing numbers of women at work brought significant changes in the distribution of the labour force in Malaysia [Malaysia. 2003a: 2002: 2001a]. More women were seen in male dominated occupations. However, Malaysian women are still the dominant participants at home [Jamilah. 2001: Noraini. 2001: Siti Rohani. 1991].

My findings indicated that the participants have become fully aware of the demands of the modern environment, as well as the need to get sufficient educational qualifications and paid jobs before deciding to get married. Getting married entails the responsibility of sustaining the family and bearing the financial expenses of bringing up children. This means that women are not free from traditional duties, and leads to a "double burden". On one hand, they need to be 'modern' and earn wages, and on the other hand, they need to adjust to traditional norms by fulfilling obligations like dutiful women, wives and mothers.

Nowadays, married women are concerned about quality in bringing up children [Jamilah. 2001]. However, based on my study, the main responsibility for day-to-day childcare goes to the mothers, whereas fathers only participated a little. Previous studies indicated that relatively few of the employed married women with children continued to work and take their

children back home, to be cared for by their families [Jamilah. 1995: 1994b]. Nevertheless, the recent trend was to hire a domestic helper in the house to care for the children or to send children to nurseries while they were working [Noraini. 2001], which is also shown here. Thus, it suggests that Malaysian ways of life have been changed, and most importantly, they have been accepted by society.

The Prospect of Women in Engineering in Malaysia

A trend towards increasingly technology-intensive industries in Malaysia calls for skilled workers, including women. Although a great deal of improvement has occurred in women's education and labour participation, there are still areas where women lag behind their male counterparts in the technological sectors. In addition, despite technological changes in industry, which have led to changes in the skills and expertise of workers, more women are seen as professional, yet with less power. For example, when they are in very demanding occupations such as engineering, they are directed towards administration and middle management positions rather than top management and the technical side. My female engineer interviewees experienced the same scenario at PetCo.

Female engineers tended to move into female 'niches' within the management [Crompton and Sanderson. 1990]. These niches tend to involve the provision of specialist services, which are skilled jobs rather than management that has a controlling power [Devine. 2003: Crompton. 1999: Kanter. 1995]. Women generally do not hold the positions with the highest power. Savage [1992] argues that women who enter middle management have the opportunity to get professional positions in which they can practice their expertise, but they have very limited chances of climbing a bureaucratic hierarchy through movement into managerial work. In short, as the education and skill levels of women increase, more professional jobs are available for women in the labour force. Nevertheless, women still find difficulty in reaching the highest levels of power in organisations.

Even supposing the proportion of women professionals has increased in the labour force, women have not simply moved into male jobs. Although promotion in engineering and science careers in organisations necessitate

moving from doing the actual engineering and scientific work to managing the people [Evetts. 1996], this career route of engineering into management has posed a problem of a professional identity for female engineers. The "feminisation of work" [Bradley et. al. 2000] seemed to appear in engineering whereby the very nature of certain engineering jobs, tasks and skills have changed in ways to make them more suitable for women.

Conclusion

As I am approaching the final section, I shall return to the basic research questions. I aimed to understand firstly, how employed women in Malaysia progressed in line with industrialisation in the global economy. Secondly, how they integrate these economic changes into the demands of the workplace and home. It was hypothesised that elements of a paradox would appear.

The traditional image of Malay women seems to be paradoxical. In many ways she is the manager of the house, as well as the decision-maker, but still obedient to her husband as the head of the family. She contributes her money to the household, but still the husband is recognised as the family provider and responsible for her upkeep. Apparently, this is not only happening in Malaysia. Siltanen [1994] found in the British household that although women contribute financially, their husbands' money would always be the main financial source.

The case of women, work and home is already inconsistent but it is more complicated when religion and *adat*, the two main contributors to Malay culture, are also attributed to the situation. In most cases related to home and the family, female employees in my study inclined to conform to the conventional perspective. They agreed that the household chores and taking care of the family were their job. Their husbands were the heads of the family, thus have less responsibility for the household management. The husband was the principal breadwinner, thus they provided the financial maintenance for the family.

Although my findings were based on small samples[80], it did suggest a typical pattern for the married employed women to favour family life rather than employment, particularly when a clash of priorities occurred. As for the women in my study, despite the modern attitudes displayed by them, many still held to the conventional attitudes, which supported the sexual division of labour and condoned the subordinate position of women. Sizeable numbers of interviewees still believe in distinctive gender roles and patterns of behaviour, which overwhelmingly keep men in their privileged position.

Based on the answers from the participants, I assumed that the conflicts of work and family roles exist due to the intertwining effects of religions and *adat*. Due to the inadequacy of explicit interpretation of gender relations in Islamic discussion [Abaza. 2002], the patriarchal elements have filled up the gap to dominate the general outlook of the society that shapes the Malaysian way of life. The illustrations from my study showed how patriarchal elements have been used to control women. A few participants had begun with difficulty to challenge the patriarchal elements. The authority of cultural traditions and values is even now still strong. Women tended to go along with the rules of society, even though it was not to their overall benefit.

On the basis of my study, it is therefore important for the Government to advocate policies in obtaining wider and fuller acceptance for women to work. To achieve this, fundamental changes are needed in the cultural system. At the moment, cultural attitudes towards women's work and reproductive roles tend to reinforce social barriers, which limit most women. A perception change or paradigm shift regarding the potential women's role in economic development for a patriarchal society like Malaysia is necessary. It could chip away certain cultural bias and religious bigotry against women in the workplace. Mohamed Bakri [1999] urged the modernisation of Malaysia by narrowing down the authority of religious and cultural aspects. They need to recapture the Quranic culture of openness and freedom by challenging obsolete knowledge systems, particularly on inferiority and the secondary position of women.

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[80] The research samples include 259 respondents and 34 interviewees.

Many women want a more egalitarian environment, but somehow it is believed that family and home restrains them from going further in the labour force. This female dilemma will remain until society has adjusted, mentally and materially, to a new condition whereby it is possible for women to satisfactorily combine the pursuit of a chosen career with marriage and family life. Only the will the appeal of a traditional maternal role and hopes of marriage cease to be in acute conflict with more economic considerations.

To reinforce roles for women is a backward step. As I have found, improvements to assist women at work and home are needed. If establishing marriage, managing the household and caring for children are the things expected by society, then members of society should promote these to the level of social interest. The responsibility of administering home affairs as well as giving birth and bringing up children that rests on women's shoulders is by no means a private and domestic matter. Moreover, they should no longer be a sole woman's responsibility, but a shared responsibility of both men and women. The Government should be looking into eliminating discrimination by breaking stereotypes and freeing women from their traditional roles.

I have identified the real exigency this kind of research in Malaysia. It seems that only lately has the Government dedicated its efforts and resources to include issues on the progress and development of female workers. The unavailability of the very latest and contemporary sources on women and employment in this country is really crucial, and has consequently affected the development and welfare of women. In particular, I hoped to disclose the general patterns of women's workforce situation in Malaysia as well as the current practice of household management among the dual-earners in a family. Finally, my study has shown the positive contribution of Malaysian women in the economy and the household. However, it has highlighted the strains and tensions women face in fulfilling their two roles. Support from the Government, employers and husbands is needed to help women to achieve their full potential and resolve the dilemmas of work and home.

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Appendix 1

Questionnaire Booklet

Code QS - ....

Dear friends,
This questionnaire is meant for all women who are currently working at PetCo. Most questions asked are concerned about the issues of women and work. As a working woman yourself, these issues must be dear to you. Every working woman at PetCo is invited and therefore included in this academic project.
[Kertas kajiselidik ini ditujukan kepada semua wanita yang bekerja di PetCo sekarang. Kebanyakan soalan-soalan yang dikemukan adalah berkenaan isu-isu wanita dan pekerjaan. Cik/Puan sebagai pekerja wanita pasti memahami dan dapat meyelami isu-isu yang diutarakan ini. Semua pekerja wanita di PetCo adalah dipelawa untuk menyertai projek akademik ini]

Since this project is to comprehend the current pattern and trend of working women in Malaysia, your answer and opinion will not be considered as a reflective image of PetCo but rather a general understanding of today's working women in Malaysia. The project will treat your answers and opinions such the utmost strict anonymity.
[Oleh kerana tujuan projek akademik ini adalah untuk memahami corak dan aliran semasa pekerja wanita di Malaysia, semua jawapan dan pendapat Cik/Puan tidak akan sama sekali dianggap sebagai memberi imbasan imej kepada PetCo tetapi hanyalah sebagai pemahaman secara am kedudukan pekerja wanita di Malaysia pada hari ini. Oleh yang demikian, projek kajiselidik ini akan memastikan jawapan dan pendapat yang Cik/Puan berikan dianggap sebagai amat sulit].

This questionnaire might appear to be terribly long and a bit intrusive.

However, there are places where you have to skip answering some questions. Fundamentally, all of the questions are significantly important for this academic project. Please give your honest anwer, please try to answer all questions related to you and please follow each instruction.
[Kertas kajiselidik ini mungkin nampaknya terlalu panjang dan terlalu menggugat hal peribadi. Namun, kedapatan bahagian yang mana Cik/Puan perlu membiarkannya tanpa memberi sebarang jawapan. Keperluan kepada semua soalan yang dikemukakan adalah amat jelas bagi projek akademik ini. Sila berikan jawapan kepada semua soalan yang berkaitan dengan Cik/Puan, sila jawab semua soalan dan sila ikuti setiap arahan].

Thank you very much.
[Terimakasih]

»»»

Instructions:
Please √ whichever it applies (unless it has been instructed otherwise).
- Some questions required you to explain a little bit more, especially the one with **'Please specify'**. If the given spaces are not enough, could you please use some extra spaces provided at the final page of this questionnaire.
[Arahan:
Sila √ di petak berkenaan (sehinggalah diberitahu sebaliknya).
- Ada antara soalan yang dikemukakan memerlukan kepada lebih penjelasan dari Cik/Puan, terutama soalan yang menyebut **'Sila nyatakan'**. Jika ruang yang diberikan tidak mencukupi, sila gunakan ruangan lebihan yang dikhususkan pada mukasurat terakhir kertas kajiselidik ini]*

Section A
Your Personal Information
[Bahagian A – Maklumat Diri Cik/Puan]

1. **What is the highest level of education that you hold?**
[Apakah tahap pelajaran tertinggi yang Cik/Puan pegang?]
   - ☐ **None 1**
     [Tiada]
   - ☐ **Certificate 2**
     [Sijil]
   - ☐ **Diploma 3**
     [Diploma]
   - ☐ **Bachelors Degree 4**
     [Ijazah Sarjana Muda]
   - ☐ **Masters Degree 5**
     [Ijazah Sarjana]
   - ☐ **PhD degree and above 6**
     [Ijazah Doktor Kehormat dan seterusnya]

2. **Please select your ethnic-group.**
[Sila pilih kumpulan kumpulan etnik Cik/Puan]
   - ☐ **Chinese 1**
   - ☐ **Indian 2**
   - ☐ **Malay 3**
   - ☐ **Others 4**
     (Please specify) _____

3. **Please choose your age range.**
[Sila pilih kumpulan umur Cik/Puan]
   - ☐ **20 and below 1**

1

<table>
<tr><td>☐</td><td>21 – 25 2</td></tr>
<tr><td>☐</td><td>26 – 30 3</td></tr>
<tr><td>☐</td><td>31 – 35 4</td></tr>
<tr><td>☐</td><td>36 – 40 5</td></tr>
<tr><td>☐</td><td>41 – 45 6</td></tr>
<tr><td>☐</td><td>46 – 50 7</td></tr>
<tr><td>☐</td><td>51 and above 8</td></tr>
</table>

4. How long have you been working with PetCo?
[Sudah berapa tahunkah Cik/Puan bekerja dengan PetCo]

- ☐ 0 – 2 years 1
- ☐ 3 – 5 years 2
- ☐ 6 – 8 years 3
- ☐ 9 years and above 4

5. What is your position in PetCo?
[Dimanakah kedudukan jawatan Cik/Puan dalam PetCo?]

- ☐ Administration 1
  [Pengurusan]
- ☐ Clerical 2
  [Pengkeranian]
- ☐ General Support 3
  [Sokongan Am]
- ☐ Personnel and Human Resource Management 4
  [Perjawatan dan Pengurusan Sumber Manusia]
- ☐ Research Planning and Development 5
  [Perancangan Kajian dan Kemajuan]
- ☐ Technical 6
  [Teknikal]
- ☐ Other 7 *(Please specify)*
  _____

6. What is your marital status?
[Apakah status perkahwinan Cik/Puan]

- ☐ Single 1
  [Belum berkahwin]
- ☐ Engaged to be married 2
  [Bertunang]
- ☐ Married 3
  [Sudah berkahwin]
- ☐ Separated (but still married) 4
  [Berpisah (tetapi masih dalam ikatan perkahwinan)]
- ☐ Divorced 5
  [Telah bercerai]
- ☐ Widowed 6
  [Balu (kematian suami)]

7. (If you are married or once married) At what age range did you marry?
[(Jika Cik/Puan sudah berkahwin atau pernah berkahwin) Pada lingkungan umur berapakah Cik/Puan mendirikan rumahtangga?]

- ☐ 20 years old and below 1

<table>
<tr><td>☐</td><td>21 – 25 years old 2</td></tr>
<tr><td>☐</td><td>26 – 30 years old 3</td></tr>
<tr><td>☐</td><td>31 – 35 years old 4</td></tr>
<tr><td>☐</td><td>36 – 40 years old 5</td></tr>
<tr><td>☐</td><td>40 years old and above 6</td></tr>
</table>

8. What is your monthly income range?
[Berapakah lingkungan pendapatan bulanan Cik/Puan?]

- ☐ RM500 – 2000 1
- ☐ RM2001 – 4000 2
- ☐ RM4001 – 6000 3
- ☐ RM 6001 – 8000 4
- ☐ RM 8001 – 10000 5
- ☐ RM 10001 and more 6

9. Please choose which category to identify your religious and philosophical beliefs.
[Sila pilih di kategori manakah bagi menentukan kepercayaan keagaamaan Cik/Puan]

- ☐ Buddhism 1
- ☐ Christianity 2
- ☐ Confucionism 3
- ☐ Hinduism 4
- ☐ Islam 5
- ☐ Taoism 6
- ☐ Others 7 *(Please specify)*
  _____

10. Do you have children (or dependent)?
[Adakah Cik/Puan mempunyai anak (atau tanggungan)?]

☐ YES 1   ☐ NO 2

[If YES please continue to answer below]
[Jika YA sila terus menjawab soalan seterusnya]
[If NO go to <u>Question 13</u>]
[Jika TIDAK sila terus ke <u>Soalan 13</u>]

11. How many children (or dependent) you have?
[Berapakah bilangan anak (atau tanggungan) yang Cik/Puan punyai?]
(Please specify)
_____

12. What are their ages? *(Please specify)*
[Apakah umur mereka?]

- 1st child/dependent 1 _____
- 2nd child/dependent 2 _____
- 3rd child/dependent 3 _____
- 4th child/dependent 4 _____
- 5th child/dependent 5 _____
- 6th child/dependent 6 _____
- 7th child/dependent 7 _____
- Others 8 _____

13. Do you have a house helper?
[Adakah Cik/Puan mempunyai pembantu rumah?]

☐ YES 1   ☐ NO 2

[If YES please continue to answer below]
[Jika YA sila terus menjawab soalan seterusnya]

[If NO go to Section B]
[Jika TIDAK sila terus ke Seksyen B]

14. What is her nationality?
[Apakah kerakyatan beliau]
- ☐ Local 1
  [Tempatan]
- ☐ Non Local 2
  [Bukan Tempatan]
  (Please specify)
  ☐ Indonesian 1
  ☐ Filipino 2
  ☐ Thai 3
  ☐ Others 4
  (Please specify) _____

15. Is she working full time and staying with you?
[Adakah beliau bekerja sepenuh masa dan tinggal bersama-sama dengan Cik/Puan?]
- ☐ YES 1   ☐ NO 2

16. Who pays for her salary?
[Siapakah yang membayar gaji beliau?]
- ☐ Yourself 1
- ☐ Your husband/partner 2
- ☐ Other family member 3

Section B
Your Opinion about the Working Life
[Bahagian B – Pendapat Cik/Puan tentang Kehidupan Bekerja]

17. Why do you work?
(Please choose ONLY the 3 aspects most important ones)
[Mengapa Cik/Puan bekerja?
(Sila pilih HANYA 3 aspek yang paling penting bagi Cik/Puan)]
- ☐ To make use of my skills 1
  [Untuk mempergunakan kemahiran saya]
- ☐ To have friends and companions 2
  [Untuk mendapat kawan dan teman]
- ☐ To support my family financially 3
  [Untuk menanggung beban kewangan keluarga saya]
- ☐ To have my own money for to spend on myself 4
  [Untuk memperolehi wang bagi kegunaan saya sendiri]
- ☐ To escape from domestic boredom 5
  [Untuk melarikan diri dari kebosanan rumahtangga]

18. What is your view on the importance of work to a woman and her family?
[Apakah pendapat Cik/Puan tentang kepentingan pekerjaan kepada seorang wanita dan keluarganya]

1. A woman and her family both benefit if she does a job.
[Wanita dan keluarganya mendapat keberuntungan jika beliau bekerja]
- ☐ Strongly agree 1
  [Amat bersetuju]
- ☐ Agree 2
  [Bersetuju]
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree 3
  [Tiada pendapat tertentu]
- ☐ Disagree 4
  [Tidak bersetuju]
- ☐ Strongly disagree
  [Amat tidak bersetuju]
- ☐ Don't know 6
  [Tidak tahu]

2. A woman and her family will be happier if she does goes out to work.
[Wanita dan keluarganya akan lebih gembira jika beliau keluar bekerja]
- ☐ Strongly agree 1
  [Amat bersetuju]
- ☐ Agree 2
  [Bersetuju]
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree 3
  [Tiada pendapat tertentu]
- ☐ Disagree 4
  [Tidak bersetuju]
- ☐ Strongly disagree
  [Amat tidak bersetuju]
- ☐ Don't know 6
  [Tidak tahu]

3. A woman who works is taking away a job of a man.
[Seorang wanita yang bekerja telah mengambil satu peluang pekerjaan dari seorang lelaki]
- ☐ Strongly agree 1
  [Amat bersetuju]
- ☐ Agree 2
  [Bersetuju]
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree 3
  [Tiada pendapat tertentu]
- ☐ Disagree 4
  [Tidak bersetuju]
- ☐ Strongly disagree
  [Amat tidak bersetuju]
- ☐ Don't know 6

4. **An industry in Malaysia could not be carried out successfully without the work involvement of women workers.**
[Sesebuah industri di Malaysia tidak akan berjaya tanpa penglibatan kerja dari golongan pekerja wanita]

☐ **Strongly agree 1**
[Amat bersetuju]
☐ **Agree 2**
[Bersetuju]
☐ **Neither agree nor disagree 3**
[Tiada pendapat tertentu]
☐ **Disagree 4**
[Tidak bersetuju]
☐ **Strongly disagree**
[Amat tidak bersetuju]
☐ **Don't know 6**
[Tidak tahu]

5. **A job that a woman has gives a feeling of emotional security.**
[Dengan bekerja seseorang wanita itu merasakan emosi beliau lebih kukuh]

☐ **Strongly agree 1**
[Amat bersetuju]
☐ **Agree 2**
[Bersetuju]
☐ **Neither agree nor disagree 3**
[Tiada pendapat tertentu]
☐ **Disagree 4**
[Tidak bersetuju]
☐ **Strongly disagree**
[Amat · tidak bersetuju]
☐ **Don't know 6**
[Tidak tahu]

6. **At the times of high unemployment, married women who are working should stop working and should stay at home.**
[Dalam keadaan kekurangan pekerjaan, wanita yang sudah berkahwin dan bekerja sepatutnya tidak bekerja dan harus hanya berada di rumah]

☐ **Strongly agree 1**
[Amat bersetuju]
☐ **Agree 2**
[Bersetuju]
☐ **Neither agree nor disagree 3**
[Tiada pendapat tertentu]
☐ **Disagree 4**
[Tidak bersetuju]
☐ **Strongly disagree**

[Amat tidak bersetuju]
☐ **Don't know 6**
[Tidak tahu]

7. **A married woman has the right to work if she wants to, whatever her family's situation is.**
[Wanita yang sudah berkahwin berhak untuk bekerja, tanpa mengira keadaan kedudukan keluarga beliau]

☐ **Strongly agree 1**
[Amat bersetuju]
☐ **Agree 2**
[Bersetuju]
☐ **Neither agree nor disagree 3**
[Tiada pendapat tertentu]
☐ **Disagree 4**
[Tidak bersetuju]
☐ **Strongly disagree**
[Amat tidak bersetuju]
☐ **Don't know 6**
[Tidak tahu]

19. **What is your opinion on the workload faced by the married working women at the office?**
[Apakah pendapat Cik/Puan tentang bebanan kerja pejabat yang dihadapi oleh wanita yang sudah berkahwin dan bekerja]

1. **Married working women can the make family better off economically.**
[Wanita yang berkahwin dan bekerja dapat membantu ekonomi keluarga]

☐ **Strongly agree 1**
[Amat bersetuju]
☐ **Agree 2**
[Bersetuju]
☐ **Neither agree nor disagree 3**
[Tiada pendapat tertentu]
☐ **Disagree 4**
[Tidak bersetuju]
☐ **Strongly disagree**
[Amat tidak bersetuju]
☐ **Don't know 6**
[Tidak tahu]

2. **The place of a married woman is really at home if the husband can afford the family expenditure.**
[Kedudukan sebenar wanita yang telah berkahwin adalah di rumah jika suami beliau mampu mengeluarkan perbelanjaan keluarga].

☐ **Strongly agree 1**

☐ *[Amat bersetuju]*
☐ **Agree 2**
[Bersetuju]
☐ **Neither agree nor disagree 3**
[Tiada pendapat tertentu]
☐ **Disagree 4**
[Tidak bersetuju]
☐ **Strongly disagree**
[Amat tidak bersetuju]
☐ **Don't know 6**
[Tidak tahu]

3. **Officework will make them feel more independent.**
[Kerja pejabat membolehkan mereka merasa lebih bebas]
☐ **Strongly agree 1**
[Amat bersetuju]
☐ **Agree 2**
[Bersetuju]
☐ **Neither agree nor disagree 3**
[Tiada pendapat tertentu]
☐ **Disagree 4**
[Tidak bersetuju]
☐ **Strongly disagree**
[Amat tidak bersetuju]
☐ **Don't know 6**
[Tidak tahu]

4. **Officework places a lot of emotional stress on women.**
[Kerja pejabat memberi banyak tekanan perasaan kepada wanita]
☐ **Strongly agree 1**
[Amat bersetuju]
☐ **Agree 2**
[Bersetuju]
☐ **Neither agree nor disagree 3**
[Tiada pendapat tertentu]
☐ **Disagree 4**
[Tidak bersetuju]
☐ **Strongly disagree**
[Amat tidak bersetuju]
☐ **Don't know 6**
[Tidak tahu]

5. **Officework enables them to make use of their intellectual abilities.**
[Kerja pejabat membolehkan mereka mempergunakan keupayaan daya pemikiran mereka]
☐ **Strongly agree 1**
[Amat bersetuju]
☐ **Agree 2**
[Bersetuju]
☐ **Neither agree nor disagree 3**

☐ *[Tiada pendapat tertentu]*
☐ **Disagree 4**
[Tidak bersetuju]
☐ **Strongly disagree**
[Amat tidak bersetuju]
☐ **Don't know 6**
[Tidak tahu]

6. **Officework limits women's interaction with society.**
[Kerja pejabat menghadkan hubungan wanita dengan masyarakat]
☐ **Strongly agree 1**
[Amat bersetuju]
☐ **Agree 2**
[Bersetuju]
☐ **Neither agree nor disagree 3**
[Tiada pendapat tertentu]
☐ **Disagree 4**
[Tidak bersetuju]
☐ **Strongly disagree**
[Amat tidak bersetuju]
☐ **Don't know 6**
[Tidak tahu]

7. **Officework done by working mothers has a bad influence on their children.**
[Kerja pejabat yang dilakukann oleh para ibu yang bekerja mempunyai pengaruh yang tidak baik kepada anak-anak mereka]
☐ **Strongly agree 1**
[Amat bersetuju]
☐ **Agree 2**
[Bersetuju]
☐ **Neither agree nor disagree 3**
[Tiada pendapat tertentu]
☐ **Disagree 4**
[Tidak bersetuju]
☐ **Strongly disagree**
[Amat tidak bersetuju]
☐ **Don't know 6**
[Tidak tahu]

8. **Officework can promote equality between women and their husbands.**
[Kerja pejabat boleh digunakan bagi mencapai hak persamaan antara para wanita dengan suami mereka]
☐ **Strongly agree 1**
[Amat bersetuju]
☐ **Agree 2**
[Bersetuju]
☐ **Neither agree nor disagree 3**
[Tiada pendapat tertentu]

☐   **Disagree 4**
       [Tidak bersetuju]

☐   **Strongly disagree**
       [Amat   tidak
       bersetuju]

☐   **Don't know 6**
       [Tidak tahu]

20. Do you take overtime?
[Adakah Cik/Puan melakukan kerja-lebih-masa?]
    ☐ YES 1   ☐ NO 2

[If YES please continue to answer below]
[Jika YA sila terus menjawab soalan seterusnya]

[If NO go to <u>Question 22</u>]
[Jika TIDAK sila terus menjawab <u>Soalan 22</u>]

21. Why do you take overtime?
[Mengapa Cik/Puan melakukan kerja-lebih-masa?]
1. **To have extra money for myself.**
   [Untuk mendapatkan wang tambahan bagi kegunaan saya sendiri]
       ☐ YES 1   ☐ NO 2
2. **To provide additional financial assistance for family expanditure.**
   [Untuk memberi bantuan kewangan tambahan bagi perbelanjaan]
       ☐ YES 1   ☐ NO 2
3. **To escape from merely doing household work.**
   [Untuk mengelakkan diri dari hanya melakukan kerja-kerja rumahtangga sahaja]
       ☐ YES 1   ☐ NO 2
4. **To complete task of-the-day.**
   [Untuk menyudahkan tanggungjawab kerja pejabat bagi hari yang tersebut]
       ☐ YES 1   ☐ NO 2

22. Do you consider yourself as a workaholic?
[Adakah Cik/Puan boleh mengibaratkan diri sebagai seorang yang amat gemar bekerja?
    ☐ YES 1   ☐ NO 2

23. Have you attended any training for:
[Pernahkah Cik/Puan menyertai:]
1. **A technical course?**
   [Kursus teknikal]
       ☐ YES 1   ☐ NO 2
2. **A conference/seminar?**
   [Persidangan/seminar]
       ☐ YES 1   ☐ NO 2
3. **A management course?**
   [Kursus pengurusan]
       ☐ YES 1   ☐ NO 2

[If YES to <u>any</u> of the above, please continue to answer below]
[Jika YA kepada <u>salah satu dari</u> perkara yang di atas, sila terus memberikan jawapan pada perkara di bawah]

[If NO to <u>all</u> of the above, please immediately go to <u>Question 27</u>]
[Jika TIDAK kepada <u>semua</u> perkara yang di atas, sila terus menjawab <u>Soalan 27</u>]

24. How satisfied are you with the training that you have secured?
[Setakat manakah Cik/Puan berpuashati dengan latihan yang diterima?]
    ☐   **Strongly satisfied 1**
       [Amat berpuashati]
    ☐   **Satisfied 2**
       [Puashati]
    ☐   **Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied 3**
       [Tiada pendapat tertentu]
    ☐   **Dissatisfied 4**
       [Tidak berpuashati]
    ☐   **Strongly dissatisfied 5**
       [Amat tidak berpuashati]
    ☐   **Don't know 6**
       [Tidak tahu]

25. What is the reason do you take such training course?
[Mengapa Cik/Puan menyertai kursus latihan tersebut?]
1. **To get away temporarily from the workload pressure at the workplace.**
   [Dapat mengelakkan diri buat sementara waktu dari timbunan bebanan kerja di tempat kerja]
       ☐ YES 1   ☐ NO 2
2. **To enrich my work skills and techniques.**
   [Untuk memperkayakan kemahiran dan teknik kerja saya]
       ☐ YES 1   ☐ NO 2
3. **The management has forced it.**
   [Pihak pengurusan telah memaksa saya]
       ☐ YES 1   ☐ NO 2
4. **Others (Please specify)**
   [Lain-lain sebab, sila nyatakan]
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

26. What do you think of the training course that you have received?
[Apakah pendapat Cik/Puan tentang kursus latihan yang diterima?]
1. **It is directly relevant to my officework (specific to where my career is heading).**

[Ia amat bersangkut paut dengan kerja pejabat saya (amat berkaitan dengan arah tuju karier saya)]
☐ YES 1   ☐ NO 2

2. **It increases my formal knowledge and skills on the job.**
[Ia dapat menambahkan pengetahuan dan kemahiran asas tentang kerja saya]
☐ YES 1   ☐ NO 2

3. **The course has somehow only increased the burden of my job responsibilities.**
[Kursus tersebut hanya menambahkan beban tanggungjawab kerja saya]
☐ YES 1   ☐ NO 2

4. **The course assists me in using and applying new technological skills in my present line of job.**
[Kursus tersebut membantu saya mempergunakan kemahiran teknologi baru ke dalam bidang kerja saya]
☐ YES 1   ☐ NO 2

5. **It enriches my ability and competency to diagnose some technical difficulties.**
[Ia memperkayakan kebolehan dan keupayaan saya dalam mengenalpasti masalah teknikal]
☐ YES 1   ☐ NO 2

6. **It helps me to trouble-shoot the problem in my work.**
[Ia berupaya membantu saya menyelesaikan masalah dalam kerja saya]
☐ YES 1   ☐ NO 2

7. **Totally useless, the course is not relevant to my job at all.**
[Amat tidak berfaedah, kursus tersebut tidak membantu kerja saya sama sekali]
☐ YES 1   ☐ NO 2

8. **Others** *(Please specify)*
[Lain-lain sebab, sila nyatakan]
_____
_____
_____
_____

27. **(For those who received none) Why don't you receive any training course?**
[(Kepada mereka yang tidak menerima sebarang kursus) Mengapa Cik/Puan tidak menerima sebarang kursus latihan?]
_____
_____
_____
_____

28. **Who do you think received offer more for any training course at PetCo?**

[Siapakah yang anda fikir lebih banyak menerima tawaran untuk menyertai sebarang kursus latihan di PetCo?]
☐ **Women** 1   ☐ **Men** 2
[Wanita]   *[Lelaki]*

29. **How would you rate yourself as at work?**
[Bagaimana Cik/Puan menilaikan diri Cik/Puan di tempat kerja?]
☐   **Excellent** 1
      [Cemerlang]
☐   **Good** 2
      [Bagus]
☐   **Fairly good** 3
      [Agak bagus]
☐   **Bad** 4
      [Tidak bagus]
☐   **Don't know** 5
      [Tidak tahu]

30. **Why is working is important to you?**
[Mengapa bekerja itu penting bagi diri Cik/Puan?]
_____
_____
_____
_____

31. **Do you wish to continue working?**
[Adakah Cik/Puan ingin terus bekerja?]
☐ YES 1   ☐ NO 2

Section C
Your Opinion about Work and Family Commitment
[Bahagian C – Pendapat Cik/Puan Tentang Kerja dan Tanggungjawab Keluarga]

32. **Are you to be employed up to _____?**
[Adakah Cik/Puan ingin terus bekerja sehingga _____?]
1. **marriage**
[berkahwin]
☐ YES 1   ☐ NO 2   ☐ N.A 3
2. **having the first child**
[mendapat anak pertama]
☐ YES 1   ☐ NO 2   ☐ N.A 3
3. **your spouse has a sufficient income**
[pasangan Cik/Puan memperolehi pendapatan yang memuaskan]
☐ YES 1   ☐ NO 2   ☐ N.A 3
4. **I will be working as long as it suits me**
[Saya akan terus bekerja semahu saya]
☐ YES 1   ☐ NO 2   ☐ N.A 3

33. **Do you feel guilty that you don't spend enough time with your husband/partner and children?**
[Adakah Cik/Puan merasa bersalah kerana tidak dapat meluangkan lebih

4

masa dengan suami/pasangan dan anak-anak Cik/Puan?]

   ☐ **YES** 1   ☐ **NO** 2   ☐ **N.A** 3

34. Are you feeling too tired to play with your children at home?
[Adakah Cik/Puan merasa penat untuk bermesra dengan anak-anak di rumah?]

   ☐ **YES** 1   ☐ **NO** 2   ☐ **N.A** 3

35. Overall, can you balance the demand of your officework and family? (For the case of those who are single, this may also apply to your family of origin who may include your parents and siblings)
[Secara keseluruhannya, bolehkah Cik/Puan mengimbangi kerja pejabat dan keluarga? (Bagi mereka yang belum berkahwin, soalan ini boleh juga ditujukan kepada keluarga asal termasuk ibubapa dan adik beradik Cik)]

   ☐ **YES** 1   ☐ **NO** 2   ☐ **N.A** 3

36. Do you feel doing officework is more rewarding than having a family life (If you are single, this may also apply to your family of origin)?
[Adakah Cik/Puan merasa melakukan kerja-kerja pejabat adalah lebih memuaskan hati dari menjalani kehidupan berkeluarga? (Bagi mereka yang belum berkahwin, soalan ini boleh juga ditujukan kepada keluarga asal Cik)]

   ☐ **YES** 1   ☐ **NO** 2   ☐ **N.A** 3

37. Do you bring officework to home?
[Adakah Cik/Puan membawa balik kerja pejabat ke rumah?]

   ☐ **YES** 1   ☐ **NO** 2

38. Is it sometime true to you that 'home' feel like a 'workplace' should feel?
[Adakah benar kadang-kadang Cik/Puan merasakan 'rumah' seperti berada di 'tempat kerja'?]

   ☐ **Very often** 1
   [Senantiasa]
   ☐ **Quite often** 2
   [Agak selalu]
   ☐ **Occasionally** 3
   [Kadang-kadang]
   ☐ **Very rarely** 4
   [Amat Jarang]

39. Does your 'workplace' feel like a 'home' should feel?
[Adakah Cik/Puan merasakan 'tempat kerja' seperti berada di 'rumah'?]

   ☐ **Very often** 1
   [Senantiasa]
   ☐ **Quite often** 2

   [Agak selalu]
   ☐ **Occasionally** 3
   [Kadang-kadang]
   ☐ **Very rarely** 4
   [Amat Jarang]

40. Do you consider your working friends as your main source of social support?
[Adakah Cik/Puan menganggap kawan sekerja sebagai punca sokongan sosial yang paling utama?]

   ☐ **Very often** 1
   [Senantiasa]
   ☐ **Quite often** 2
   [Agak selalu]
   ☐ **Occasionally** 3
   [Kadang-kadang]
   ☐ **Very rarely** 4
   [Amat Jarang]

41. Where are you really appreciated?
[Di manakah diri Cik/Puan lebih dihargai?]

   ☐ **Mainly at home** 1
   [Biasanya di rumah]
   ☐ **Equally at home and workplace** 2
   [Sama sahaja samada di rumah atau di tempat kerja]
   ☐ **Mainly at workplace** 3
   [Biasanya di tempat kerja]

42. Where do you have the most friends?
[Di manakah Cik/Puan mendapat lebih kawan?]

   ☐ **Mainly at home** 1
   [Biasanya di rumah]
   ☐ **Equally at home and workplace** 2
   [Sama sahaja samada di rumah atau di tempat kerja]
   ☐ **Mainly at workplace** 3
   [Biasanya di tempat kerja

43. Where do you feel the most relaxed and secured?
[Di mana Cik/Puan merasa lebih tenteram dan selamat?]

   ☐ **Mainly at home** 1
   [Biasanya di rumah]
   ☐ **Equally at home and workplace** 2
   [Sama sahaja samada di rumah atau di tempat kerja]
   ☐ **Mainly at workplace** 3
   [Biasanya di tempat kerja

44. Which area of life, do you think more interesting?
[Di keadaan kehidupan manakah Cik/Puan merasa lebih menarik?]

☐ Life at home 1
[Kehidupan di rumah]
☐ Life at the workplace 2
[Kehidupan di tempat kerja]

45. Describe your feeling about your life at 'home'.
[Perihalkan perasaan Cik/Puan tentang kehidupan di rumah]
1. **Home is a place to relax.**
[Rumah merupakan suatu tempat untuk berehat-rehat]
☐ YES 1 ☐ NO 2
2. **Home is a place of more ups than downs.**
[Rumah merupakan suatu tempat yang lebih banyak keseronokan dari keburukan]
☐ YES 1 ☐ NO 2
3. **Home is a chaotic place.**
[Rumah merupakan suatu tempat yang kucar kacir]
☐ YES 1 ☐ NO 2
4. **Home is a place of a living hell.**
[Rumah merupakan suatu tempat yang amat dahsyat]
☐ YES 1 ☐ NO 2
5. **Home is a place of more downs than ups.**
[Rumah merupakan suatu tempat yang lebih banyak keburukan dari keseronokan]
☐ YES 1 ☐ NO 2

46. Describe your feeling about your life at the 'workplace'.
[Perihalkan perasaan Cik/Puan tentang kehidupan di tempat kerja]
1. **Workplace is a place to relax.**
[Tempat kerja merupakan suatu tempat untuk berehat-rehat]
☐ YES 1 ☐ NO 2
2. **Workplace is a place of more ups than down.**
[Tempat kerja merupakan suatu tempat yang lebih banyak keseronokan dari keburukan]
☐ YES 1 ☐ NO 2
3. **Workplace is a chaotic place.**
[Tempat kerja merupakan suatu tempat yang kucar kacir]
☐ YES 1 ☐ NO 2
4. **Workplace is a place of a living hell.**
[Tempat kerja merupakan suatu tempat yang amat dahsyat]
☐ YES 1 ☐ NO 2
5. **Workplace is a place of more downs than ups.**
[Tempat kerja merupakan suatu tempat yang lebih banyak keburukan dari keseronokan]
☐ YES 1 ☐ NO 2

47. What is your opinion of the list of the statements below on housework?
[Apa pandangan Cik/Puan berkenaan kenyataan di bawah tentang kerja rumah?]
1. **Even if a woman is working, she should mainly do the housework and childcare.**
[Walaupun seorang wanita itu bekerja, beliau patut memainkan peranan yang terbesar dalam melakukan kerja rumahtangga dan penjagaan anak-anak]
☐ Strongly agree 1
[Amat bersetuju]
☐ Agree 2
[Bersetuju]
☐ Neither agree nor disagree 3
[Tiada pendapat tertentu]
☐ Disagree 4
[Tidak bersetuju]
☐ Strongly disagree
[Amat tidak bersetuju]
☐ Don't know 6
[Tidak tahu]
2. **Because both husband and wife are working, housework and childcare should be shared equally between them.**
[Disebabkan suami dan isteri bekerja, kerja rumah dan penjagaan anak-anak patut dikongsi bersama]
☐ Strongly agree 1
[Amat bersetuju]
☐ Agree 2
[Bersetuju]
☐ Neither agree nor disagree 3
[Tiada pendapat tertentu]
☐ Disagree 4
[Tidak bersetuju]
☐ Strongly disagree
[Amat tidak bersetuju]
☐ Don't know 6
[Tidak tahu]
3. **(If both are working) Since men are stronger than women, the husband should take on more of the housework and childcare responsibilities than the wife.**
[(Jika kedua-dua bekerja) Disebabkan lelaki lebih kuat dari wanita, suami hendaklah mengambil lebih tanggungjawab terhadap kerja rumahtangga dan penjagaan anak-anak dari isteri]
☐ Strongly agree 1
[Amat bersetuju]
☐ Agree 2

[Bersetuju]

☐ **Neither agree nor disagree** 3
[Tiada pendapat tertentu]

☐ **Disagree** 4
[Tidak bersetuju]

☐ **Strongly disagree**
Amat tidak bersetuju]

☐ **Don't know** 6
[Tidak tahu]

4. **(If both are working) Whoever come home first after work, regardless husband or the wife, should start undertaking the housework and childcare.**
[(Jika kedua-kedua bekerja) Sesiapa yang terlebih dahulu sampai di rumah, tidak kira suami atau isteri, harus mengambilalih kerja rumah dan penjagaan anak-anak]

☐ **Strongly agree** 1
[Amat bersetuju]

☐ **Agree** 2
[Bersetuju]

☐ **Neither agree nor disagree** 3
[Tiada pendapat tertentu]

☐ **Disagree** 4
[Tidak bersetuju]

☐ **Strongly disagree**
[Amat tidak bersetuju]

☐ **Don't know** 6
[Tidak tahu]

48. **Please give your opinion on the statement concerning sex-role attitudes.**
[Sila berikan pendapat Cik/Puan berkenaan kenyataan tentang kedudukan peranan lelaki dan wanita]

1. **It is better for the family if the husband is the principal breadwinner and working outside the home whereas the wife has the primary responsibility for the home and children.**
[Adalah lebih baik jika sesebuah keluarga itu mempunyai seorang suami yang bertindak sebagai pemberi nafkah utama dan bekerja di luar rumah manakala seorang isteri itu memegang tanggungjawab utama di rumah dan anak-anak]

☐ **Strongly agree** 1
[Amat bersetuju]

☐ **Agree** 2
[Bersetuju]

☐ **Neither agree nor disagree** 3

[Tiada pendapat tertentu]

☐ **Disagree** 4
[Tidak bersetuju]

☐ **Strongly disagree**
[Amat tidak bersetuju]

☐ **Don't know** 6
[Tidak tahu]

2. **A job is okay, but what most women really want is a home and children.**
[Mempunyai pekerjaan itu baik, akan tetapi apa yang amat diperlukan bagi seorang wanita itu adalah sebuah rumahtangga dan anak-anak]

☐ **Strongly agree** 1
[Amat bersetuju]

☐ **Agree** 2
[Bersetuju]

☐ **Neither agree nor disagree** 3
[Tiada pendapat tertentu]

☐ **Disagree** 4
[Tidak bersetuju]

☐ **Strongly disagree**
[Amat tidak bersetuju]

☐ **Don't know** 6
[Tidak tahu]

3. **A woman's feeling of being a housewife is just as fulfilling as she is working for pay.**
[Perasaan seorang wanita yang menjadi seorang surirumahtangga adalah sama sahaja dari segi kepuasan diri sebagaimana beliau bekerja untuk mendapatkan pendapatan]

☐ **Strongly agree** 1
[Amat bersetuju]

☐ **Agree** 2
[Bersetuju]

☐ **Neither agree nor disagree** 3
[Tiada pendapat tertentu]

☐ **Disagree** 4
[Tidak bersetuju]

☐ **Strongly disagree**
[Amat tidak bersetuju]

☐ **Don't know** 6
[Tidak tahu]

4. **Having a job is the best way for a woman to be an independent person.**
[Mempunyai pekerjaan adalah jalan terbaik bagi seorang wanita untuk mendapatkan kebebasan diri]

☐ **Strongly agree** 1
[Amat bersetuju]

☐ **Agree** 2

☐ [Bersetuju]
☐ Neither agree nor disagree 3
[Tiada pendapat tertentu]
☐ Disagree 4
[Tidak bersetuju]
☐ Strongly disagree
[Amat tidak bersetuju]
☐ Don't know 6
[Tidak tahu]

5. Both the husband and the wife should financially contribute the household income.
[Kedua-dua suami dan isteri harus menyumbang wang mereka sebagai pendapatan keluarga]
☐ Strongly agree 1
[Amat bersetuju]
☐ Agree 2
[Bersetuju]
☐ Neither agree nor disagree 3
[Tiada pendapat tertentu]
☐ Disagree 4
[Tidak bersetuju]
☐ Strongly disagree
[Amat tidak bersetuju]
☐ Don't know 6
[Tidak tahu]

49. The questions below concerning on you and your money.
[Persoalan-persoalan di bawah adalah berkenaan wang ringgit kepunyaan Cik/Puan]

1. Can you do anything you wish with your own money?
[Bolehkah Cik/Puan melakukan apa sahaja diri dengan wang ringgit sendiri mengikut kehendak hati Cik/Puan?]
☐ YES 1   ☐ NO 2

2. Do you contribute part of your income (or whole of it) as a family expenditure?
[Adakah Cik/Puan menyumbang sebahagian dari pendapatan Cik/Puan (atau keseluruhan darinya) bagi perbelanjaan keluarga?]
☐ YES 1   ☐ NO 2   ☐ N.A 3

3. Do you believe it is the responsibility of your husband/partner to take responsibility to the expenditure and the maintenance of the family without your financial assistance at all?
[Adakah Cik/Puan percaya bahawa tanggungjawab suami/pasangan Cik/Puan adalah memastikan perbelanjaan dan keperluan keluarga terjamin tanpa sebarang bantuan kewangan dari Cik/Puan]
☐ YES 1   ☐ NO 2   ☐ N.A 3

4. (If your financial assistance is required from you for the expanditure and the maintenance of your family) Are you happy and willingly give up your money for those purposes?
[(Jika bantuan kewangan diperlukan dari Cik/Puan bagi memastikan perbelanjaan dan keperluan keluarga terjamin) Adakah Cik/Puan merasa gembira dan sanggup mengeluarkan wang Cik/Puan untuk sebab yang tersebut?]
☐ YES 1   ☐ NO 2   ☐ N.A 3

[If you are married/cohabited and have a husband/partner, please answer the question below]
[Jika Cik/Puan telah berkawin/bersekedudukan dan mempunyai suami/pasangan, sila jawab soalan yang berikut]

[If you are single, please go to Question 52]
[Jika Cik/Puan belum berkahwin, sila terus ke Soalan 52]

50. How would you generally describe the participation of your husband/partner in the household works?
[Bagaimana Cik/Puan secara amnya memperihalkan penyertaan suami/pasangan Cik/Puan dalam kerja rumahtangga?]

(Please choose ONLY 1 circumstance that most described your husband's/partner's involvement in the household)
[Sila pilih HANYA 1 keadaan yang paling utama dalam memperihalkan penglibatan suami/pasangan Cik/Puan dengan kerja rumahtangga]
☐ He undertakes most of the household work 1
[Beliau melakukan hampir kesemua kerja rumahtangga]
☐ He equally shares the housework with you 2
[Beliau membahagikan kerja rumah dengan Cik/Puan secara saksama]
☐ He does some housework but less than you are 3
[Beliau melakukan kerja rumah tetapi berkurangan berbanding dengan Cik/Puan]

☐ He might help you when you are busy or engaged with other things 4
[Beliau mungkin membantu Cik/Puan apabila Cik/Puan sibuk atau melakukan pelbagai perkara lain]

☐ He does little housework 5
[Beliau hanya sedikit melakukan kerja rumah]

☐ He does almost no housework 6
[Beliau langsung tidak melakukan kerja rumah]

51. **What are the general reactions of your husband/partner in the sharing out of the household work (Which response is the most likely he usually uses)?**
[Apa reaksi yang biasa ditunjukkan oleh suami/pasangan Cik/Puan dalam perkongsian kerja rumahtangga (Apakah tindakbalas yang teramat biasa beliau berikan)?]

1. **Washing-up kitchen utensils**
[Mencuci peralatan dapur]
   ☐ Definitely, that is his job 1
   [Tidak disangkal lagi, itu merupakan kerja beliau]
   ☐ Most of the time he does it 2
   [Dalam kebanyakan masa beliau melakukannya]
   ☐ Occasionally only after nagging, he will do that 3
   [Kadang-kadang hanya selepas dileter, beliau melakukannya]
   ☐ Only once in awhile, he does it willingly, but only when he wants to do it 4
   [Hanya sekali-sekala, beliau melakukannya dengan kerelaan hati, akan tetapi hanya apabila beliau mahu melakukannya]
   ☐ Never, he believes that it is not his job 5
   [Tidak pernah, beliau percaya itu bukan kerjanya]

2. **Cleaning the house**
[Mengemas rumah]
   ☐ Definitely, that is his job 1
   [Tidak disangkal lagi, itu merupakan kerja beliau]
   ☐ Most of the time he does it 2
   [Dalam kebanyakan masa beliau melakukannya]
   ☐ Occasionally only after nagging, he will do that 3
   [Kadang-kadang hanya selepas dileter, beliau melakukannya]

☐ Only once in awhile, he does it willingly, but only when he wants to do it 4
[Hanya sekali-sekala, beliau melakukannya dengan kerelaan hati, akan tetapi hanya apabila beliau mahu melakukannya]

☐ Never, he believes that it is not his job 5
[Tidak pernah, beliau percaya itu bukan kerjanya]

3. **Washing clothes**
[Membasuh pakaian]
   ☐ Definitely, that is his job 1
   [Tidak disangkal lagi, itu merupakan kerja beliau]
   ☐ Most of the time he does it 2
   [Dalam kebanyakan masa beliau melakukannya]
   ☐ Occasionally only after nagging, he will do that 3
   [Kadang-kadang hanya selepas dileter, beliau melakukannya]
   ☐ Only once in awhile, he does it willingly, but only when he wants to do it 4
   [Hanya sekali-sekala, beliau melakukannya dengan kerelaan hati, akan tetapi hanya apabila beliau mahu melakukannya]
   ☐ Never, he believes that it is not his job 5
   [Tidak pernah, beliau percaya itu bukan kerjanya]

4. **Cooking**
[Memasak]
   ☐ Definitely, that is his job 1
   [Tidak disangkal lagi, itu merupakan kerja beliau]
   ☐ Most of the time he does it 2
   [Dalam kebanyakan masa beliau melakukannya]
   ☐ Occasionally only after nagging, he will do that 3
   [Kadang-kadang hanya selepas dileter, beliau melakukannya]
   ☐ Only once in awhile, he does it willingly, but only when he wants to do it 4
   [Hanya sekali-sekala, beliau melakukannya dengan kerelaan hati, akan tetapi hanya apabila beliau mahu melakukannya]
   ☐ Never, he believes that it is not his job 5
   [Tidak pernah, beliau percaya itu bukan kerjanya]

5. **Shopping for groceries**
[Membeli barangan dapur]

□ **Definitely, that is his job** 1
[Tidak disangkal lagi, itu merupakan kerja beliau]

□ **Most of the time he does it** 2
[Dalam kebanyakan masa beliau melakukannya]

□ **Occasionally only after nagging, he will do that** 3
[Kadang-kadang hanya selepas dileter, beliau melakukannya]

□ **Only once in awhile, he does it willingly, but only when he wants to do it** 4
[Hanya sekali-sekala, beliau melakukannya dengan kerelaan hati, akan tetapi hanya apabila beliau mahu melakukannya]

□ **Never, he believes that it is not his job** 5
[Tidak pernah, beliau percaya itu bukan kerjanya]

52. **How would rate yourself as a homemanager?**
[Bagaimanakah dapat Cik/Puan nilaikan diri Cik/Puan sebagai pengurus rumahtangga?]

□ **Excellent** 1
[Cemerlang]

□ **Good** 2
[Bagus]

□ **Fairly good** 3
[Agak bagus]

□ **Bad** 4
[Tidak bagus]

□ **Don't know** 5
[Tidak tahu]

Thank you for your kindness in participating and co-operating in this academic project.

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Extra Spaces

For Question 25: Number 4 (in page 8)

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For Question 27 (in page 9)

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For Question 26: Number 8 (in page 9)

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For Question 30 (in page 9)

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Appendix 2

Summation: The Questionnaire Data

Section A

Q1	Education		
		None	3.9%
		Certificate	27.8%
		Diploma	14.3%
		Bachelors	46.3%
		Masters	6.6%
		PhD-above	1.2%

Q2	Ethnic-group		
		Chinese	1.9%
		Indian	2.3%
		Malay	95.8%

Q3	Age-range		
		20-below	0.8%
		21-25	25.1%
		26-30	23.2%
		31-35	19.3%
		36-40	17.8%
		41-45	10.8%
		46-50	1.9%
		51-above	1.2%

Q4	Seniority		
		0-2 years	29.3%
		3-5	17.8%
		6-8	8.5%
		9-above	44.4%

Q5	Position		
		Adminstration	9.7%
		Clerical	26.6%
		General Support	6.6%
		Personnel and HRM	14.7%
		Research Planning	2.7%
		Technical	25.5%
		Others	14.3%

Q6	Marital status		
		Single	27.4%
		Engaged	3.9%
		Married	66.8%
		Separated	0.4%
		Divorced	0.8%
		Widowed	0.8%

Q7	Marriage age		
		20 years-below	2.3%
		21-25	44.4%
		26-30	18.5%
		31-35	3.5%
		40-above	0.4%

Q8	Income range		
		RM500-2000	37.5%
		2001-4000	40.5%
		4001-6000	13.1%
		6001-8000	5.4%
		8001-10000	2.3%

		10001-more	1.2%

Q9   Religious and philosophical beliefs

	Buddhism	1.2%
	Christianity	0.8%
	Hinduism	0.4%
	Islam	97.7%

Q10 Children/dependent

	Yes	59.5%
	No	40.5%

Q11 Number of children/dependent

	1 child	8.9%
	2 children	15.8%
	3 children	18.9%
	4 children	8.1%
	5 children	4.2%
	6 children	1.5%

Q13 House helper

	Yes	25.2%
	No	73.7%

Q14 Nationality

	Local	6.9%
	Non-local	18.5%

14.1   House helper's nationality

	Indonesian	18.1%
	Thai	1.2%

Q15 Full-time working

	Yes	20.5%
	No	5.0%

Q16 Salary payment

	Yourself	14.7%
	Your husband/partner	7.7%
	Other	3.1%

Section B

Q18 Importance of work

18.1 A woman and her family both benefit if she does a job

	Strongly agree	39.0%
	Agree	52.9%
	Neither	6.9%
	Disagree	0.8%
	Strongly disagree	0.4%
	Don't know	-

18.2 A woman and her family will be happier if she does goes out to work

	Strongly agree	4.6%
	Agree	39.8%
	Neither	34.4%
	Disagree	19.3%
	Strongly disagree	1.5%
	Don't know	0.4%

18.3 A woman who works is taking away a job of a man

	Strongly agree	2.7%
	Agree	13.1%
	Neither	9.3%
	Disagree	49.8%
	Strongly disagree	23.6%
	Don't know	1.5%

18.4 An industry in Malaysia could not be carried out successfully
without the work involvement of women workers
Strongly agree	33.6%
Agree	45.9%
Neither	9.7%
Disagree	8.9%
Strongly disagree	1.2%
Don't know	0.8%

18.5 A job that a woman has gives a feeling of emotional security
Strongly agree	26.7%
Agree	56.0%
Neither	10.8%
Disagree	4.6%
Strongly disagree	-
Don't know	1.5%

18.6 At times of high unemployment, married women who are working
should stop working and should stay at home
Strongly agree	2.7%
Agree	10.8%
Neither	9.7%
Disagree	50.6%
Strongly disagree	25.5%
Don't know	0.8%

18.7 A married woman has the right to work if she want to, whatever her
family's situation is
Strongly agree	18.9%
Agree	44.4%
Neither	14.7%
Disagree	18.9%
Strongly disagree	1.9%
Don't know	1.2%

Q19 Workload

19.1 Married working women can make family better off economically
Strongly agree	46.7%
Agree	51.0%
Neither	1.5%
Disagree	0.4%
Strongly disagree	-
Don't know	0.4%

19.2 The place of a married woman is really at home if the husband can
afford the family expenditure
Strongly agree	17.1%
Agree	37.1%
Neither	13.9%
Disagree	25.1%
Strongly disagree	6.2%
Don't know	0.4%

19.3 Working will make them feel more independent
Strongly agree	12.4%
Agree	47.9%
Neither	15.8%
Disagree	22.8%
Strongly disagree	0.4%
Don't know	0.8%

19.4 Working places a lot of emotional stress on women
Strongly agree	4.2%
Agree	28.2%
Neither	29.7%
Disagree	36.7%
Strongly disagree	1.2%
Don't know	-

19.5 Working enables them to make use of their intellectual abilities
Strongly agree	38.2%
Agree	57.9%
Neither	3.1%

	Disagree	0.8%
	Strongly disagree	-
	Don't know	-

19.6 Working limits women's interaction with society

	Strongly agree	0.8%
	Agree	9.7%
	Neither	12.4%
	Disagree	61.0%
	Strongly disagree	16.2%
	Don't know	-

19.7 Working does by working mothers has a bad influence on their children

	Strongly agree	0.4%
	Agree	3.1%
	Neither	15.1%
	Disagree	62.2%
	Strongly disagree	18.5%
	Don't know	0.8%

19.8 Working can promote equality between women and their husbands

	Strongly agree	6.6%
	Agree	27.8%
	Neither	22.4%
	Disagree	35.1%
	Strongly disagree	6.9%
	Don't know	1.2%

Q20 Over-time

	Yes	49.8%
	No	50.2%

Q21 Why takes over time

21.1 extra money

	Yes	23.8%
	No	76.2%

21.2 additional financial assistance

	Yes	28.5%
	No	71.5%

21.3 an escape from household work

	Yes	8.5%
	No	91.5%

21.4 completing task-of-day

	Yes	97.7%
	No	2.3%

Q22 Workaholic

	Yes	40.2%
	No	59.5%

Q23 Training

23.1 technical course

	Yes	52.1%
	No	47.7%

23.2 conference/seminar

	Yes	64.9%
	No	34.6%

23.3 management course

	Yes	68.3%
	No	30.9%

Q24 Training satisfaction

	Strongly satisfied	6.2%
	Satisfied	62.9%
	Neither	10.4%
	Dissatisfied	4.6%
	Don't know	-

Q25 Training reason
25.1 get away
Yes 39.4%
No 44.8%
25.2 skills enrichment
Yes 84.2%
No 15.8%
25.3 management enforcement
Yes 32.4%
No 51.4%

Q26 Think of training course
26.1 relevant
Yes 77.6%
No 6.2%
26.2 increase knowledge
Yes 81.9%
No 1.9%
26.3 increase the burden
Yes 13.1%
No 70.3%
26.4 apply new skills
Yes 74.9%
No 8.9%
26.5 enriches ability
Yes 68.7%
No 15.1%
26.6 helps trouble shoot problems
Yes 76.4%
No 6.9%
26.7 useless
Yes 0.8%
No 83.0%

Q28 Received more offer for training
Women 8.1%
Men 79.5%
Equally 12.4%

Q29 Rating your work
Excellent 10.0%
Good 59.5%
Fairly good 25.5%
Bad 0.4%
Don't know 4.6%

Q31 Wish to continue working
Yes 89.6%
No 10.4%

Section C

Q32 Employed up
32.1 marriage
Yes 58.4%
No 18.1%
NA 23.6%
32.2 first child
Yes 56.4%
No 20.1%
NA 23.6%
32.3 sufficient spouse income
Yes 64.1%
No 24.7%
NA 11.2%

32.4	as long it suits me	
	Yes	88.0%
	No	9.7%
	NA	2.3%

Q33 Feel guilty not spending time with husband/partner and children

Yes	47.1%
No	29.3%
NA	23.2%

Q34 Feeling too tired to play with children at home

Yes	27.0%
No	43.2%
NA	29.3%

Q35 Balancing the demand of working and family

Yes	81.5%
No	13.1%
NA	5.0%

Q36 Working is more rewarding than a family life

Yes	12.0%
No	78.8%
NA	9.3%

Q37 Bring home office work

Yes	37.5%
No	61.4%
NA	0.8%

Q38 Home feels like a workplace should feel

Very often	1.5%
Quite often	4.2%
Occasionally	28.6%
Very rarely	65.6%

Q39 Workplace feels like a home should feel

Very often	5.4%
Quite often	10.0%
Occasionally	29.7%
Very rarely	54.8%

Q40 Working friends as your social support

Very often	23.6%
Quite often	28.2%
Occasionally	37.5%
Very rarely	10.8%

Q41 Feel really appreciated

Mainly at home	20.1%
Equally	68.3%
Mainly at workplace	11.6%

Q42 Have the most friends

Mainly at home	6.9%
Equally	44.8%
Mainly at workplace	48.3%

Q43 Feel the most relaxed and secured

Mainly at home	63.3%
Equally	34.4%
Mainly at workplace	2.3%

Q44 Area of life, which is interesting

Life at home	79.9%
Life at workplace	20.1%

Q45   Feeling at home
       45.1   place to relax
                       Yes   91.5%
                       No   8.5%
       45.2   more ups than downs
                       Yes   93.1%
                       No   6.9%
       45.3   chaotic place
                       Yes   2.3%
                       No   97.3%
       45.4   living hell
                       Yes   0.8%
                       No   99.2%
       45.5   more downs than ups
                       Yes   0.4%
                       No   97.7%

Q46   Feeling at workplace
       46.1   place to relax
                       Yes   9.3%
                       No   90.3%
       46.2   more ups than downs
                       Yes   58.7%
                       No   40.2%
       46.3   chaotic place
                       Yes   18.1%
                       No   81.1%
       46.4   living hell
                       Yes   3.1%
                       No   96.1%
       46.5   more downs than ups
                       Yes   13.1%
                       No   86.1%

Q47   Statements on housework
       47.1   Even a woman is working, she should mainly do the housework and childcare
                       Strongly agree 38.6%
                       Agree   32.0%
                       Neither   9.3%
                       Disagree   15.1%
                       Strongly disag 5.0%
                       Don't know   -
       47.2   Because both husband and wife working, housework and childcare should be
               shared equally between them
                       Strongly agree 68.0%
                       Agree   28.2%
                       Neither   3.1%
                       Disagree   0.1%
                       Strongly disag -
                       Don't know   -
       47.3   (If both are working) Since men are stronger than women, the husband
               should take on more of the housework and childcare responsibilities than the
               wife
                       Strongly agree 9.7%
                       Agree   15.1%
                       Neither   23.6%
                       Disagree   47.5%
                       Strongly disag 3.9%
                       Don't know   0.4%
       47.4   (If both are working) Whoever come home first after work, regardless husband
               or the wife, should start undertaking the housework and childcare
                       Strongly agree 24.7%
                       Agree   51.4%
                       Neither   14.3%
                       Disagree   8.5%

Strongly disag   0.4%
Don't know   0.8%

Q48   Statements concerning sex-role attitudes

   48.1   It is better for the family if the husband is the principal breadwinner and working outside the home whereas the wife has the primary responsibility for the home and children

Strongly agree	22.4%
Agree	36.3%
Neither	23.6%
Disagree	15.8%
Strongly disag	1.5%
Don't know	0.4%

   48.2   A job is okay, but what most women really want is a home and children

Strongly agree	35.9%
Agree	44.4%
Neither	12.7%
Disagree	6.6%
Strongly disag	1.5%
Don't know	0.4%

   48.3   A woman's feeling of being a housewife is just as fulfilling as she is working for pay

Strongly agree	14.3%
Agree	34.7%
Neither	20.5%
Disagree	23.6%
Strongly disag	3.1%
Don't know	3.9%

   48.4   Having a job is the best way for a woman to be an independent person

Strongly agree	27.4%
Agree	30.5%
Neither	17.0%
Disagree	22.4%
Strongly disag	1.9%
Don't know	0.8%

   48.5   Both the husband and the wife should financially contribute the household income

Strongly agree	35.5%
Agree	47.5%
Neither	9.3%
Disagree	5.4%
Strongly disag	1.5%
Don't know	0.4%

Q49   You and your money

   49.1   do anything wish

Yes	78.4%
No	21.2%

   49.2   contribute part of your income

Yes	89.2%
No	5.4%
NA	5.0%

   49.3   husband's responsibility for family expenditure

Yes	44.4%
No	48.6%
NA	6.6%

   49.4   happy and willing to give income for family expenditure

Yes	86.5%
No	6.6%
NA	5.0%

Q50   Husband's participation in housework

undertakes	1.9%
equally shares	15.4%
does some	19.3%
might help	20.1%

	does little	8.5%
	does none	2.7%

Q51 Husband's sharing the housework
- **51.1** washing kitchen utensils

definitely	-
most time	15.8%
occasionally	4.2%
once a while	43.6%
never	3.9%

- **51.2** cleaning house

definitely	0.8%
most time	15.8%
occasionally	5.8%
once a while	40.2%
never	5.0%

- **51.3** washing clothes

definitely	5.1%
most time	15.1%
occasionally	3.1%
once a while	34.0%
never	12.0%

- **51.4** cooking

definitely	-
most time	9.7%
occasionally	1.5%
once a while	37.5%
never	18.9%

- **51.5** shopping for groceries

definitely	8.1%
most time	37.1%
occasionally	3.9%
once a while	17.0%
never	1.5%

Q52 Rating as a house manager

Excellent	16.6%
Good	52.1%
Fairly good	23.2%
Bad	1.9%
Don't know	5.8%

Appendix 3

Interview Guide for Female Workers at PetCo

Code INT/A-001

Date/Day: ..../....................
Time: ....
Venue: ....

Interview Guide **Type-A**

Instruction: An A-Type Interview schedule is strictly meant for the <u>female engineers</u> at PetCo who are <u>married</u> with a husband or <u>cohabiting</u> with a partner (with or without children).
[Arahan: Rangka Temubual Jenis-A ini hanya diperuntukkan kepada <u>jurutera-jurutera wanita</u> di PetCo yang <u>sudah berkahwin</u> dan mempunyai suami atau <u>bersekududukan</u> dengan pasangan (yang mempunyai atau tidak mempunyai anak)]

** First of all, let us start by having an Introduction.
[Pertama sekali, mungkin boleh kita memulakan perbincangan kita dengan Pendahuluan]

A. INTRODUCTION
[A. PENDAHULUAN]
Tell me something about yourself.
- What is your ethnic group?
- What is your highest level of education?
[Nyatakan sesuatu tentang diri Puan. Apakah kumpulan etnik Puan? Apakah tahap pelajaran tertinggi Puan?]

** Now, why don't we talk about some information, which your background, personal obbies and interests.
[Sekarang, bagaimana jika kita bercakap tentang hal berkenaan Latar Belakang, Hobi dan Minat Puan]

B. PERSONAL INFORMATION
[B. BERKENAAN KENYATAAN DIRI]
Locational Information
[Berkenaan Lokasi]
How would you describe the neighbourhood that you have come from?
- Was it a rural, a suburb or an urban centre?
- Which states of Malaysia are you are originally come from?
[Bagaimana Puan dapat menceritakan kehidupan kediaman setempat di mana Puan berasal? Adakah ia merupakan kawasan perkampungan, pinggir bandar besar atau pusat bandar? Dari negeri manakah di dalam Malaysia Puan berasal?]

What kind of neighbourhood area do you live in now such as the type of housing/facilities?
- How does it differ from where you grew up before?
[Apakah jenis keadaan kawasan kediaman setempat yang Puan tinggal sekarang seperti jenis perumahan/kemudahan? Apakah jenis keadaan kawasan kediaman yang pernah Puan tinggal dahulu]

What is the distance from your workplace and home?
- How do you commute?
- Do you commute alone (or with other people such as your husband/partner?)
[Apakah jarak dari tempat kerja dan rumah Puan? Bagaimanakah Puan pergi dan balik? Adakah Puan pergi dan balik sendirian (atau bersama dengan orang lain seperti suami/pasangan Puan?]

Personal Hobby and Interest
[Hobi dan Minat Tersendiri]
What do you enjoy doing on days that you are not at work (or during your free days?
- How much does that matter to you?

[Apakah yang Puan gemar lakukan pada hari-hari yang Puan tidak bekerja (atau hari-hari bebas tanpa bekerja)? Bagaimanakah kepentingannya kepada Puan?]

Do you have leisure time for yourself? Can you describe how you spend your leisure time (for example to pursue your own interest such as shopping for yourself, sewing, bowling, playing board games etc.)?
- Do have a time to take a nap or just want to feel lazy?

[Adakah Puan mempunyai masa terluang untuk bersantai? Cuba Puan ceritakan bagaimana Puan menghabiskan masa bersantai tersebut (contohnya untuk melakukan hobi kegemaran Puan seperti membelibelah untuk diri sendiri, menjahit, bermain bowling, bermain papan permainan dsb.)? Adakan Puan mempunyai sedikit masa untuk melelapkan mata di waktu petang atau mempunyai masa hanya untuk 'bermalas-malas' mengikut kehendak diri?]

Who do you socialise with, mainly?
- Where do you go? What do you do?

[Siapakah teman bersosial Puan, biasanya? Di manakah tempat Puan pergi bersosial? Apakah Puan lakukan?]

** Since this academic project is about women and work, could you please share your view about your career.
[Oleh kerana projek akademik ini adalah berkenaan dengan wanita dan kerja, bolehkah Puan berkongsi pendapat tentang karier Puan]

C. INFORMATION on YOUR CAREER IDENTITY
[C. BERKENAAN IDENTITI KARIER PUAN]
What is your (position) designation in PetCo?
- How could describe your job description and responsibility (what you really do)?
- How much you earn in a month (* Go for the highest approximation)?

[Apakah kedudukan jawatan Puan dalam PetCo? Bagaimanakah Puan menyatakan diskripsi dan tanggungjawab kerja Puan (apakah yang sebenarnya Puan kendalikan)? Berapakah pendapatan sebulan Puan (nyatakan pendapatan tertinggi secara lebih kurang)?]

How do you get on with other people with whom you work (for example with other fellow employees, with your supervisor or with the management?
- Have you ever felt that they doubt your commitment to your job?

[Bagaimanakah Puan menyesuaikan diri dengan mereka yang bekerja dengan Puan (seperti dengan teman-teman sekerja, dengan penyelia Puan atau dengan pihak pengurusan)? Pernahkah Puan rasakan bahawa mereka sangsi terhadap komitmen Puan terhadap kerja?]

Do you ever receive any training scheme?
- Details of any training courses you did, now and then.
- How does it contribute to your work?

[Adakah Puan pernah menerima sebarang kursus latihan? Perincikan sebarang kursus latihan yang telah Puan sertai, dulu dan sekarang? Bagaimana ia menyumbang kepada kerja Puan?]

Have you managed to update your academic knowledge (or research expertise) in your work since you started working?
- Have you managed to apply the latest technology in your engineering specialisation?
{Probe} This could include reading of appropriate books or periodicals, occasional attendance at conferences, informal contact with relevant industry etc.

[Bagaimana Puan dapat memperkinikan pengetahuan akademik (atau penyelidikan) dalam bidang pengkhususan Puan semenjak Puan mula bekerja? Dapatkah Puan mempergunakan teknologi terkini ke dalam pengkhususan kejuruteraan Puan?
{Penelitian} Ini merangkumi membaca buku-buku atau bahan-bahan bacaan yang berkaitan, menghadiri persidangan, perjumpaan tidak formal dengan pihak industri lain yang berkaitan dsb.]

Why do you work, really?
- How important is it to you? Do you bring officework to home?
- What is the best/worst situation you have found yourself at workplace?
- Will you stop working, due to any reason at all (for example having children, caring a sick family member etc)?

[Mengapa Puan bekerja, secara tulusnya? Bagaimanakah kepentingan kerja pada Puan? Adakah Puan membawa pulang kerja pejabat ke rumah? Apakah situasi terbaik/terburuk

yang pernah Puan alami semasa di tempat kerja? Mungkinkah Puan akan berhenti bekerja, atas sebarang sebab (contohnya mempunyai anak, merawati ahli keluarga yang sakit)?]

** Specifically, I would like you to talk about your line of duty, which is engineering.
[Secara khususnya, saya ingin Puan bercakap tentang kerja Puan, iaitu kejuruteraan]

Engineering Field
[Bidang Kejuruteraan]
Please specify your engineering specialisation (for example Chemical, Electrical, Manufacturing, Mechanical, Metallurgy etc?)
[Sila nyatakan pengkhususan kejuruteran Puan?]

Why do you prefer engineering field to the other?
• Could you imagine yourself to be not working as an engineer?
{Probe} Whatever answer, ask for 'why'.
[Mengapa Puan lebih menyukai bidang kejuruteraan berbanding bidang-bidang lain? Dapatkah Puan menggambarkan keadaan Puan jika tidak bekerja sebagai seorang jurutera?
{Penelitian}   Apapun jawapannya, tanyakan 'mengapa']

Have you ever been treated unfairly (for any reason such because of gender/age/ethnic group)?
• If Yes, how have you been able to overcome this?
• Do you get any help (or support) from the company?
[Adakah Puan pernah diperlakukan secara tidak adil (di atas sebarang sebab seperti jantina/umur/kumpulan etnik)? Jika Ya, bagaimana Puan berjaya mengatasinya? Adakah Puan mendapat sebarang bantuan (atau sokongan) dari syarikat?]

Because you are a woman, have you been 'disadvantaged or advantaged' to be involved in engineering?
• How far you can go being a female engineer?
[Kerana Puan seorang wanita, adakah Puan merasa 'kekurangan atau kelebihan' untuk terlibat dalam kejuruteraan? Berapa jauhkah Puan boleh maju ke depan sebagai seorang jurutera wanita?]

Being a female engineer, do you have to withdrawn your social life?
• What is the price of becoming an engineer to your private lives?
[Menjadi seorang jurutera wanita, adakah Puan terpaksa menarik diri dari terlibat dalam kegiatan sosial? Apakah pengorbanan demi menjadi seorang jurutera kepada kehidupan peribadi Puan?]

Do you wish to be at a higher position than you are now?
• Are there prospects of promotion?
[Adakah Puan berhasrat untuk berada di kedudukan yang lebih tinggi dari kedudukan Puan sekarang? Adakah sebarang prospek kenaikan pangkat?]

How does engineering challenge feminine traits, do you think?
• How do you perceive engineering as a profession for a woman?
• Do you think that engineering is seems as a tough and rough job?
• Should women be encouraged to become engineers?
• Any contributive thoughts about being female engineers in this twenty-first century?
[Bagaimana kejuruteraan mencabar sifat kewanitaan, pada fikiran Puan? Bagaimana dapat Puan nyatakan bidang kejuruteraan sebagai suatu kerjaya kepada seorang wanita? Adakah Puan bersetuju bahawa kejuruteraan merupakan suatu kerja yang berat dan kasar? Patutkah para wanita digalakkan menjadi jurutera? Sebarang pendapat bernas untuk jurutera wanita di abad ke dua puluh satu ini?]

Are you aware of any policy that encourages women to do engineering?
[Adakah Puan mengetahui sebarang polisi ynag menggalakkan para wanita menceburi bidang kejuruteraan?]

D. MARITAL INFORMATION
[D. Berkenaan Perkahwinan]
Can you tell me at what age did you get married?
• What is your age now (or approximately)?

[Bolehkah Puan nyatakan umur Puan ketika berkahwin? Berapakah umur Puan sekarang (atau lebih kurang)?]

What is the occupation of your husband/partner?
- Does he work at PetCo too?
- How much he earns in a month (* Go for the highest approximation)?

[Apakah pekerjaan suami/pasangan Puan? Adakah beliau bekerja di PetCo juga? Berapakah pendapatan sebulan beliau (Nyatakan pendapatan tertinggi secara lebih kurang)?]

** Being a working married woman, there must be some story and experience that you wish to share with me. So now, we are going to talk about your Professional Life and Domestic Life.
[Sebagai seorang pekerja wanita yang telah berkahwin, saya yakin Puan mempunyai cerita dan pengalaman yang dapat Puan kongsikan dengan saya. Maka sekarang, kita akan bercakap tentang Kehidupan Profesional Puan dan Kehidupan Berkeluarga Puan]

E. PROFESSIONAL LIFE and DOMESTIC LIFE
[E. KEHIDUPAN PROFESIONAL dan KEHIDUPAN BERUMAHTANGGA]
Relationship with your Husband/Partner at Home
[Hubungan dengan Suami/Pasangan Puan ketika berada di Rumah]
Do you have to sacrifice more or less your family life (or private life) by having a career? How?
[Adakah Puan terpaksa mengorbankan kehidupan berkeluarga Puan (atau kehidupan peribadi Puan) kerana disebabkan mempunyai karier? Bagaimana?]

Do your husband/partner encourage or discourage you to work?
- What kind of pressure that your husband/partner force on you for having a career?

[Adakah suami/pasangan Puan menggalakkan atau tidak menggalakkan Puan bekerja? Apakah tekanan yang dberikan kepada Puan kerana mempunyai karier?]

How do you see yourself doing domestic works?
- Do you like doing and managing domestic works?

[Bagaimanakah Puan melihat diri Puan dalam melaksanakan kerja rumah? Adakah Puan suka melaku dan menguruskan kerja rumah?]

Generally, whom does the domestic work most?
[Secara amnya, siapakah yang lebih banyak melakukan kerja rumah?]

How would you describe the help of your husband/partner in the running of the domestic work?
- Does your husband/partner help in domestic works 'when you are busy' or 'when there is no alternative'?

[Bagaimanakah pendapat Puan tentang pertolongan suami /pasangan Puan dalam melakukan kerja rumah? Adakah suami /pasangan Puan menolong melakukan kerja rumah 'apabila Puan sibuk' atau 'apabila tiada pilihan lain'?]

In what ways does your husband's/partner's contribute to childcare?
[Apakah sumbangan suami/pasangan Puan terhadap penjagaan anak-anak?]

(Between you and your husband/partner) Who has the real decision power in managing your family household, overall?
{Probe} Who decide on the matters involving buying the house, fitting the household equipment (such as TV, radio, ASTRO subscription), how many children (to have), children's education, where to take holiday, family expenditure (such as buying foods, groceries, toiletries), your employment (such having a paid job outside home), investment, unit trust and saving?
[(Antara Puan dan suami/pasangan Puan) Siapakah yang mempunyai kuasa sebenar dalam membuat keputusan dalam menguruskan keluarga Puan, secara amnya?
{Penelitian}   Siapakah yang memberi kata putus pada perkara-perkara yang melibatkan pembelian rumah, memperlengkapkan peralatan rumahtangga (seperti TV, radio, langganan ASTRO), berapakah bilangan anak (untuk dimiliki), pelajaran anak-anak, destinasi percutian, perbelanjaan keluarga (seperti membeli bahan makanan, barangan dapur, bahan-bahan mandian, pekerjaan Puan (iaitu mempunyai pekerjaan di luar rumah), pelaburan, amanah saham dan wang simpanan?]

** Now specifically, please share your experience as A Housemanager, a Wife, a Mother (if applicable) and a Female Paid Worker

[Sekarang secara khususnya, sila kongsikan pengalaman Puan sebagai Pengurus rumahtangga, seorang Isteri, Ibu (jika berkenaan) dan sebagai seorang Pekerja Wanita]

A Housemanager, a Wife, a Mother (if applicable) and a Female Paid Worker
[Puan sebagai Pengurus Rumahtangga, Isteri, Ibu (jika berkenaan) dan seorang Pekerja Wanita]

How you manage to hold several positions at a time such as being a wife, mother and housemanager, when at the same time you are also an engineer?
- What do you think of holding those jobs (or part of them) and commit to the responsibilities that attach to those jobs?

[Bagaimana Puan melaksanakan pelbagai peranan serentak iaitu sebagai seorang isteri, ibu dan pengurus rumahtangga dan dalam masa yang sama, Puan adalah seorang jurutera? Apakah perasaan Puan memegang kesemua kerja tersebut (atau sebahagian kerja tersebut) dan komit kepada tanggungjawab yang datang bersekali dengan kerja-kerja tersebut?]

Between home and the workplace, which place can you manage better?
- Do you experience a problem of 'time famine' (or time-shortage) to cope or negotiate between 'job' at work and 'job' at home? How you explain it?

[Antara rumah dan tempat kerja, tempat manakah pengurusan dapat dilakukan secara lebih baik? Adakah Puan mengalami masalah 'kebuntuan masa' (atau kesuntukan masa) dalam menangani atau mengimbangi 'kerja' di pejabat dan 'kerja' di rumah? Bagaimana Puan dapat menjelaskan hal tersebut?]

Generally it has been described that *"a workplace is a chaotic/stressful place"* and *"home is a peaceful/restful place"*.
- Do you agree with that statement?
- How would you explain your situation?

[Biasa diperkatakan bahawa "tempat kerja merupakan tempat yang kucar-kacir" dan "rumah merupakan tempat beristirehat". Adakah Puan bersetuju dengan kenyataan tersebut? Bagaimana Puan memperjelaskan keadaan Puan?]

Do you currently spend time with children?
- Do you enjoy your time with them?
- How is having (or planing to have) children affected your working life?
- Do you feel you have enough time to spend with your children?

[Adakah Puan meluangkan masa bersama anak-anak? Adakah Puan menghargai masa Puan bersama dengan mereka? Bagaimana mempunyai anak (atau merancang mempunyai) anak telah memberi kesan kepada kehidupan bekerja Puan? Adakah Puan merasakan Puan memperuntukan masa yang mencukupi bagi mereka?]

How many children (or dependent) that you have?
- What are their ages?

[Berapa bilangan anak (atau tanggungan) Puan? Apakah umur mereka?]

Are your children sent to the nursery or kindergarten?
- Who usually send them off every morning?
- Is the nursery or kindergarten nearer to your workplace or your husband's/partner's?
- In the case of emergency, who is called first?

[Adakah anak Puan dihantar ke tempat jagaan kanak-kanak atau tadika? Siapa yang biasanya menghantar mereka setiap pagi? Adakah pusat jagaan kanak-kanak atau tadika tersebut berdekatan dengan tempat kerja Puan atau tempat kerja suami/pasangan Puan? Dalam keadaan kecemasan, siapakah yang diberitahu terlebih dahulu?]

Do your children ever scream or cry when you are at home? How do you feel?
[Adakah anak-anak Puan bertempikan dan menangis apabila Puan berada di rumah? Apakah perasaan Puan?]

Do you hire a house helper at home?
- Who is she/he (background)?
- Is she working full time and stay with you?
- Who pays for her salary?
- What does your house helper really do (the coverage of her scope of work)?
- What do you think of her/his service, so far?
- How do you feel about giving up part of your childcare responsibility to your house helper?

[Adakah Puan menggaji pembantu rumah di rumah? Siapakah beliau (latar belakang)? Adakah beliau bekerja sepenuh masa dan tinggal bersama-sama dengan Puan? Siapakah yang membayar gaji beliau? Apakah pembantu rumah Puan lakukan (bidang kerja yang beliau lakukan)? Apakah pendapat Puan tentang khidmatnya, setakat ini? Bagaimana perasaan Puan terpaksa melepaskan sebahagian dari tanggungjawab penjagaan anak-anak kepada pembantu rumah?]

What happens to your household if you are unable to get the assistance of your house helper (or by other sources such as a nursery etc.)?
• How do you cope when your child or your child carer is ill?
[Apa yang berlaku kepada rumahtangga Puan jika Puan tidak mendapat sebarang bantuan dari pembantu rumah (atau dari sumber lain seperti pusat jagaan kanak-kanak dsb.)?]
Bagaimana Puan menangani keadaan apabila anak Puan atau penjaga anak Puan jatuh sakit?]

How do you cope with the 'stress' at home and 'stress' the workplace?
[Bagaimana Puan menangani masalah 'tekanan' di rumah dan 'tekanan' di tempat kerja?]

(Being a female worker and also a wife, or/and mother) What do you think would make your life easier?
[(Puan sebagai pekerja wanita dan juga isteri, atau/dan ibu)? Apakah yang Puan rasakan akan membuatkan kehidupan Puan menjadi lebih mudah?]

** Still relates about your domestic life, but now it concerns on matters involving Money in your Household.
[Masih lagi berkenaan kehidupan berkeluarga Puan, akan tetapi sekarang ditumpukan kepada hal berkenaan wang ringgit dalam rumahtangga Puan]
Matters involving Money in your Household
[Perkara berkaitan Wang-Ringgit dalam Rumahtangga Puan]
How do spend your salary?
[Bagaimana Puan membelanjakan pendapatan Puan?]

Who is paying major bills, checking the bank statement and making financial decisions?
[Siapakah yang membayar bil-bil penting, menyemak urusan bank dan membuat sebarang keputusan kewangan?]

Who really controls the money that comes into your household?
• Do you have to think twice to spend your salary on yourself?
[Siapakah yang sebenarnya mengendalikan urusan wang di dalam rumahtangga Puan? Adakah Puan terpaksa berfikir dua kali untuk membelanjakan pendapatan Puan untuk kegunaan Puan sendiri?]

Which type of banking account that you have now?
[Akaun bank jenis manakah Puan miliki sekarang?]
{Probe} Separate personal bank account
            [Akaun bank persendirian]
            Joint bank account
            [Akaun bank bersama]
            Both types
            [Kedua-dua jenis akaun bank]

**** (For those who have 'Joint bank account' or 'Both types'). Who control more the cash flow of the household income?
[(Bagi mereka yang memiliki 'Akaun bank bersama' atau 'Kedua-dua jenis akaun bank') Siapa yang lebih mengendalikan urusan kewangan pendapatan rumahtangga Puan?]
{Probe} Yourself (Wife-controlled)
            Your husband's/partner's (Husband/partner controlled)

** This academic project also wishes to understand the traditional and cultural aspects of women and work.
[Projek akademik ini juga ingin memahami aspek tradisi dan budaya berkenaan tentang wanita dan kerja]

F. TRADITIONAL and CULTURAL INFORMATION
[F. BERKENAAN TRADISI dan BUDAYA]
What your cultural tradition says about working women?
[Apakah pendapat adat tradisi Puan tentang wanita yang bekerja?]

We always hear old folk say that how high the education a woman has, how good her job is she still will end up at the kitchen, so how do you see this statement?
[Kita selalu dengar orang tua cakap setinggi mana sekalipun perempuan itu belajar, betapa baik pekerjaan dia, pasti dia akan ke ceruk dapur jugak pergi, apakah puan dapat katakan dalam hal ini]

In your view, what are the characteristics of an ideal wife and an ideal mother?
[Pada pendapat Puan, apakah kriteria untuk menjadi seorang isteri dan ibu yang ideal?]

Were there pressures to build "a home rather than a career" from others (particularly from your own parents, your husband's/partner's parents, relatives', neighbours' etc?
[Adakah tekanan untuk membina "sebuah rumahtangga dari berkarier" dari mereka (terutama dari ibubapa Puan sendiri, ibubapa suami/pasangan Puan, saudara mara, jiran tetangga, dsb.)?
How do you view a statement "a woman can't combine a career and family"?
[Bagaimana Puan dapat memberi pendapat ke atas kenyataan ini "seorang wanita itu tidak dapat menyatukan karier dan keluarga"?]

** Our discussion would not be complete without the information about your Past Academic Experience.
[Perbincangan kita tidak akan sempurna tanpa perkara berkenaan pengalaman akademik Puan yang lepas]

G. PAST ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE
[G. PENGALAMAN AKADEMIK]
How would you describe your interest in Maths and Science at school?
[Bagaimana dapat Puan nyatakan kecenderungan Puan dalam Matematik dan Sains di sekolah?]

How do you feel about your university experience (did you enjoy it, what was good/bad for you?
• Did you get any career guidance? Was it useful?
[Bagaimana perasaan Puan terhadap pengalaman semasa di universiti (adakah Puan menyukainya, adakah ia baik/buruk bagi Puan? Adakah Puan mendapat bimbingan karier? Adakah ianya berguna?]

Why did you take engineering course at the university?
• Did you have any problems or difficulties while studying for engineering course? If so, what were they?
[Mengapa Puan mengambil kursus kejuruteraan semasa di universiti? Adakah Puan pernah mengalami sebarang masalah atau kesusahan semasa belajar kursus kejuruteraan? Jika pernah, apakah perkara tersebut?]

** We are to talk now about some Influences that you have encountered in your life.
[Kita akan bercakap sekarang berkenaan sebarang Pengaruh yang Puan alami dalam hidup Puan]

H. INFLUENCES
[H. PENGARUH]
Was engineering your ambition since childhood? Why do you say that?
[Adakah menjadi seorang jurutera merupakan cita-cita Puan semenjak kecil lagi? Mengapakah Puan berkata sedemikian?]

Which people have had the most influence on your work? Is it your husband/partner, your mother, your father or others (Please specifies)?
• How did she/he encourage you?
[Siapakah yang lebih memberi memberi pengaruh terhadap pilihan karier Puan? Adakah suami/pasangan Puan, ibu Puan, bapa Puan atau orang lain? Bagaimanakah beliau memberi kata-kata perangsang tersebut?]

What did your parents think of your career choice?
• How and what people around you (such as relatives, neighbours etc.) said when they knew you have chosen an engineering course as your bachelors degree?
[Apakah pendapat ibubapa Puan terhadap pilihan pilihan karier? Bagaimana dan apakah pendapat mereka di sekeliling Puan (seperti saudara mara, jiran tetangga dsb.) apabila mereka mengetahui yang Puan telah memilih kursus kejuruteraan sebagai ijazah sarjana muda Puan?]

Did your close friends also choose engineering too?
[Adakah kawan wanita Puan turut sama memilih bidang kejuruteraan?]

** A little information of your Family
[Sedikit maklumat tentang Keluarga Puan]
Your Family
[Keluarga Puan]
What is/was the occupations of:
[Apakah pekerjaan:]
1. Your husband/partner
   [Suami/pasangan Puan]
2. Your mother
   [Ibu Puan]
3. Your father
   [Bapa Puan]
4. Your siblings (if any)
   [Adik beradik Puan (jika ada)]

Is there anybody who is close to you working as an engineer?
[Adakah sesiapa yang kenal rapat dengan Puan bekerja sebagai seorang jurutera?]

** Finally, about the Support you have received.
[Akhirnya, tentang sebarang Sokongan yang telah Puan terima]

I. SUPPORT
[I. SOKONGAN]
Who are the main people you rely on (for practical and emotional support)? How do they support?
[Siapakah mereka yang benar-benar menjadi tempat Puan bergantung harapan (untuk mendapatkan sokongan sejati dan sokongan emosi)? Bagaimana mereka memberi sokongan tersebut?]

Do you feel your family commitments have affected your career?
[Adakah Puan merasakan komitmen terhadap keluarga Puan telah menjejaskan karier Puan?]

** Just to end our discussion, could you please share some Key Moments that you have ever felt or wish to have in your life.
[Untuk menamatkan perbincangan kita, bolehkah Puan berkongsi sebarang Saat Penting yang Puan pernah alami atau yang Puan inginkan dalam hidup Puan]

J. KEY MOMENTS
[J. SAAT PENTING]
What do you think have been the crucial points in your life, which have been important to you?
[Apakah pendapat Puan tentang detik penting dalam hidup Puan?]

Looking back over your life, is there anything you would have done differently?
[Mengimbas kembali kehidupan Puan, adakah Puan ingin lakukan lain dari apa yang telah dilakukan?]

What has been the greatest achievement of your life, so far?
[Apakah kejayaan terbesar dalam hidup Puan, setakat ini?]

Thank you very much for your kind involvement and high cooperation in this academic project.
[Terimakasih di atas kesudian Puan terlibat dan bekerjasama di dalam projek akademik ini]

Code INT/B-001

Date/Day: ..../....................
Time   : ....
Venue   : ....

Interview Guide **Type-B**

[Instruction: An A-Type Interview schedule is strictly meant for the <u>female engineers</u> at PetCo who are <u>single</u> (with or without children)]
[Arahan: Rangka Temubual Jenis-B ini hanya diperuntukkan kepada jurutera-jurutera wanita di PetCo yang belum berkahwin (mempunyai atau tidak mempunyai anak)]** First of all, let us start by having an Introduction.
[Pertama sekali, mungkin boleh kita memulakan perbincangan kita dengan Pendahuluan]

A. INTRODUCTION
[A. PENDAHULUAN]
<u>Tell me something about yourself.</u>
• What is your ethnic group?
• What is your highest level of education?
[Nyatakan sesuatu tentang diri Cik? Apakah kumpulan etnik Cik? Apakah tahap pelajaran tertinggi Cik?]

** <u>Now, why don't we talk about some information, which covers your background, personal hobbies and interests.</u>
[Sekarang, bagaimana jika kita bercakap tentang hal berkenaan Latar Belakang, Hobi dan Minat Cik]

B. PERSONAL INFORMATION
[B. BERKENAAN KENYATAAN DIRI]
Locational Information
[Berkenaan Lokasi]
<u>How would you describe the neighbourhood that you have come from?</u>
• Was it a rural, a suburb or an urban centre?
• Which states of Malaysia that you are originally came from?
[Bagaimana Cik dapat menceritakan kehidupan kediaman setempat di mana Cik berasal? Adakah ia merupakan kawasan perkampungan, pinggir bandar besar atau pusat bandar? Dari negeri manakah di dalam Malaysia Cik berasal?]

<u>What kind of neighbourhood area do you live in now such as the type of housing/facilities?</u>
• How does it differ from where you grew up before?
[Apakah keadaan kawasan kediaman setempat yang Cik tinggal sekarang seperti jenis perumahan/kemudahan? Bagaimana ianya berbeza dengan keadaan di mana Cik membesar dahulu?]
<u>What is the distance from your workplace and home?</u>
• How do you commute?
• Do you commute alone (or with other people?) By whom?
[Apakah jarak dari tempat kerja dan rumah Cik? Bagaimanakah Cik pergi dan balik? Adakah Cik pergi dan balik bersendirian (atau bersama dengan orang lain?) Siapakah mereka?]

Personal Hobby and Interest
[Hobi dan Minat Tersendiri]
<u>What do you enjoy doing on days when you are not at work (or during your free days)?</u>
• How much does that matter to you?
[Apakah yang Cik gemar lakukan pada hari-hari yang Cik tidak bekerja (atau hari-hari bebas tanpa bekerja)? Bagaimanakah kepentingannya kepada Cik?]

<u>Do you have leisure time for yourself? Can you describe how you spend your leisure time (for example to pursue your own interest such as shopping for yourself, sewing, bowling, playing board games etc.)?</u>
[Adakah Cik mempunyai masa terluang untuk bersantai? Cuba Cik ceritakan bagaimana Cik menghabiskan masa bersantai tersebut (contohnya untuk melakukan hobi kegemaran Cik

seperti membelibelah untuk diri sendiri, menjahit, bermain bowling, bermain papan permainan dsb?]

Who do you socialise with, mainly?
- Where do you go? What do you do?

[Siapakah teman bersosial Cik, biasanya? Di manakah tempat Cik pergi bersosial? Apakah Cik lakukan?]

** Since this academic project is about women and work, could you please share your view about your career.

[Oleh kerana projek akademik ini adalah berkenaan dengan wanita dan kerja, bolehkah Cik berkongsi pendapat tentang karier Cik]

C. INFORMATION on YOUR CAREER IDENTITY
[C. BERKENAAN IDENTITI KARIER CIK]

What is your (position) designation in PetCo?
- How could describe your job description and responsibility (what you really do)?
- How much you earn in a month (* Go for the highest approximation)?

[Apakah kedudukan jawatan Cik dalam PetCo? Bagaimanakah Cik menyatakan diskripsi dan tanggungjawab kerja Cik (apakah yang sebenarnya Cik kendalikan)? Berapakah pendapatan sebulan Cik (nyatakan pendapatan tertinggi secara lebih kurang)?]

How do you get on with other people with whom you work (for example with other fellow employees, with your supervisor or with the management?
- Have you ever felt that they doubt your commitment to your job?

[Bagaimanakah Cik menyesuaikan diri dengan mereka yang bekerja dengan Cik (seperti dengan teman-teman sekerja, dengan penyelia Cik atau dengan pihak pengurusan)? Pernahkah Cik rasakan yang mereka sangsi terhadap komitmen Cik terhadap kerja?]

Do you ever receive any training scheme?
- Details of any training courses you did now and then.
- How does it contribute to your work?

[Adakah Cik pernah menerima sebarang kursus latihan? Perincikan sebarang kursus latihan yang telah Cik sertai dulu dan sekarang. Bagaimanakah ia menyumbang kepada kerja Cik?]

Have you managed to update your academic knowledge (or research expertise) in your work since you start working?
- Have you managed to apply the latest technology in your engineering specialisation?

{Probe} This could include reading of appropriate books or periodicals, occasional attendance at conferences, informal contact with relevant industry etc.

[Bagaimana Cik dapat memperkinikan pengetahuan akademik (atau penyelidikan) dalam kerja Cik semenjak Cik mula bekerja? Dapatkah Cik mempergunakan teknologi terkini ke dalam pengkhususan kejuruteraan Cik?
{Penelitian} Ini merangkumi membaca buku-buku atau bahan-bahan bacaan yang berkaitan, menghadiri persidangan, perjumpaan tidak formal dengan pihak industri lain yang berkaitan dsb.]

Why do you work, really?
- How important is it to you? Do you bring officework to home?
- What is the best/worst situation you have found yourself at workplace?
- Will you stop working, due to any reason at all (for example having children, caring a sick family member)?

[Mengapa Cik bekerja, secara tulusnya? Bagaimanakah kepentingan kerja pada Cik? Adakah Cik membawa pulang kerja pejabat ke rumah? Apakah situasi terbaik/terburuk yang pernah Cik alami semasa di tempat kerja? Mungkinkah Cik akan berhenti bekerja, atas sebarang sebab (contohnya mempunyai anak, merawati ahli keluarga yang sakit)].

** Specifically, I would like to talk about your line of duty, which is engineering.
[Secara khususnya, saya ingin Cik bercakap tentang kerja Cik, iaitu kejuruteraan]
Engineering Field
[Bidang Kejuruteraan]
Please specify your engineering specialisation (for example Chemical, Electrical, Manufacturing, Mechanical, Metallurgy etc?)
[Sila nyatakan pengkhususan kejuruteran Cik?]

Why do you prefer engineering field to the other?
- Could you imagine yourself to be not working as an engineer?
{Probe} Whatever answer, ask for 'why'.
[Mengapa Cik lebih menyukai bidang kejuruteraan berbanding bidang-bidang lain? Dapatkah Cik menggambarkan keadaan Cik jika tidak bekerja sebagai seorang jurutera?
{Penelitian} Apapun jawapannya, tanyakan 'mengapa']

Have you ever been treated unfairly (for any reason such because of gender/age/ethnic group)?
- If Yes, how have you been able to overcome this?
- Do you get any help (or support) from the company?
[Adakah Cik pernah diperlakukan secara tidak adil (di atas sebarang sebab seperti jantina/umur/kumpulan etnik)? Jika Ya, bagaimana Cik berjaya mengatasinya? Adakah Cik mendapat sebarang bantuan (atau sokongan) dari syarikat?]

Because you are a woman, have you been 'disadvantaged or advantaged' to be involved in engineering?
- How far you can go being a female engineer?
[Kerana Cik sebagai seorang wanita, adakah Cik merasa 'kekurangan atau kelebihan' untuk terlibat dalam kejuruteraan? Berapa jauhkah Cik boleh maju ke depan sebagai seorang jurutera wanita?]

Being a female engineer, do you have to withdrawn your social life?
- What is the price of becoming an engineer to your private lives?
[Menjadi seorang jurutera wanita, adakah Cik terpaksa menarik diri dari terlibat dalam kegiatan sosial? Apakah pengorbanan demi menjadi seorang jurutera kepada kehidupan peribadi Cik?]

Do you wish to be at a higher position than you are now?
- Are there prospects of promotion?
[Adakah Cik berhasrat untuk berada di kedudukan yang lebih tinggi dari kedudukan Cik sekarang? Adakah sebarang prospek kenaikan pangkat?]

How does engineering challenge feminine traits, do you think?
- How do you perceive engineering as a profession for a woman?
- Do you think that engineering is seems as a tough and rough job?
- Should women be encouraged to become engineers?
- Any contributive thoughts about being female engineers in this twenty-first century?
[Bagaimana kejuruteraan mencabar sifat kewanitaan, pada fikiran Cik? Bagaimana dapat Cik nyatakan bidang kejuruteraan sebagai suatu kerjaya kepada seorang wanita? Adakah Cik bersetuju bahawa kejuruteraan merupakan suatu kerja yang berat dan kasar? Patutkah para wanita digalakkan menjadi jurutera? Sebarang pendapat bernas untuk jurutera wanita di abad ke dua puluh satu ini?]

D. MARITAL INFORMATION
[D. Berkenaan Perkahwinan]
At what age do you think a woman of engineering background is ideally married? Why do you say so?
[Pada pandangan Cik apakah umur yang sesuai untuk berkahwin bagi wanita yang mempunyai latar belakang kejuruteraan? Mengapa Cik berkata sedemikian?]

How do you see yourself of having not married yet? Do you experience any dificulties being an unmarried woman? What are they?
[Bagaimana Cik melihat keadaan diri Cik yang masih lagi belum berkahwin? Adakah Cik mengalami sebarang masalah sebagai wanita yang belum berkahwin? Apakah ia?]

Are there any pressures (of any kinds) for you to get married (particularly from your own parents, your boy friend's parents, relatives', neighbours')? What are they?
[Adakah sebarang tekanan (dari sebarang punca) untuk Cik berkahwin (terutama dari ibubapa Cik sendiri, ibubapa teman lelaki Cik, saudara mara, jiran tetangga, dsb.)? Apakah ia?]

How do you want to see your marriage (once you are married)?

{Probe} Do you want you marriage to be as a kind of romantic love? Do you want your marriage to have the element of communicative togetherness? Do you want your marriage to be based on emotional sharing?
[Apakah pengharapan terhadap perkahwinan Cik
{Penelitian} Bagaimanakah Cik ingin melihat diri perkahwinan Cik (apabila Cik berkahwin)? Adakah Cik inginkan perkahwinan Cik sebagai sebuah percintaan romantik? Adakah Cik inginkan perkahwinan Cik mempunyai unsur-unsur komunikasi secara bersama? Adakah Cik inginkan perkahwinan Cik didasarkan kepada perkongsian emosi?]

** Being a working woman there must be some story and experience that you wish to share with me. So now, we are going to talk about your Professional Life and Private Life.
[Sebagai seorang pekerja wanita, saya yakin Cik mempunyai cerita dan pengalaman yang dapat Cik kongsikan dengan saya. Maka sekarang, kita akan bercakap tentang Kehidupan Profesional Cik dan Kehidupan Peribadi Cik]

E. PROFESSIONAL LIFE and PRIVATE LIFE
[E. KEHIDUPAN PROFESIONAL dan KEHIDUPAN PERIBADI]
Do you have to sacrifice more or less private life by having a career? How?
[Adakah Cik terpaksa mengorbankan kehidupan peribadi Cik kerana disebabkan mempunyai karier? Bagaimana?]

Are you in a steady relationship with a man right now? Who is he to you?
{Remark}   For the sake of this academic project, can we call him as your boy friend?
•   What is your bof friend's occupation?
•   Does your boy friend encourage or discourage you to work?
•   What kind of pressure that he forces on you for having a career?
[Adakah Cik mempunyai hubungan rapat yang kukuh dengan seorang lelaki sekarang? Siapakah beliau di sisi Cik?
{Penelitian}   Bagi projek akademik ini, bolehkah kita memanggil beliau sebagai teman lelaki Cik? Apakah pekerjaan teman lelaki Cik? Adakah beliau menggalakkan atau tidak menggalakkan Puan bekerja? Apakah tekanan yang diberikan oleh beliau kepada Cik kerana mempunyai karier?]

How do you see yourself doing domestic works?
•   Do you like doing and managing domestic works?
[Bagaimanakah Cik melihat diri Cik dalam melaksanakan kerja rumah? Adakah Cik gemar melaku dan menguruskan kerja rumah?]

Between home and the workplace, which place can you manage better?
•   Do you experience a problem of 'time famine' (or time-shortage) to cope or negotiate between 'job' at work and 'job' at home? How you explain it?
[Antara rumah dan tempat kerja, tempat manakah pengurusan dapat dilakukan secara lebih baik? Adakah Cik mengalami masalah 'kebuntuan masa' (atau kesuntukan masa) dalam menangani atau mengimbangi 'kerja' di pejabat dan 'kerja' di rumah? Bagaimana Cik dapat menjelaskan hal tersebut?]

Generally it has been described that "a workplace is a chaotic/stressful place" and "home is a peaceful/restful place".
•   Do you agree with that statement?
•   How would you explain your situation?
[Biasa diperkatakan bahawa "tempat kerja merupakan tempat yang kucar-kacir" dan "rumah merupakan tempat beristirehat". Adakah Cik bersetuju dengan kenyataan tersebut? Bagaimanakah Cik memperjelaskan keadaan Cik?]

How do you cope with the 'stress' at home and 'stress' the workplace?
[Bagaimana Cik menangani masalah 'tekanan' di rumah dan 'tekanan' di tempat kerja?]

Do you like to be around small children?
•   Can you stand to hear the screaming and crying of small children when you are at home?
[Adakah Cik suka akan kanak-kanak? Dapatkah Cik tahan mendengarkan tempikan dan tangisan kanak-kanak apabila Cik berada dirumah?]

(Being a female worker) What do you think would make your life easier?
[(Cik sebagai pekerja wanita? Apakah yang Cik rasakan akan membuatkan kehidupan Cik menjadi lebih mudah?]

** Still relates about your private life, but now it concerns on matters involving Money.
[Masih lagi berkenaan kehidupan peribadi Cik, akan tetapi sekarang ditumpukan kepada hal berkenaan hal wang ringgit]

Matters involving Money
[Perkara berkaitan Wang-Ringgit Cik]
How do you spend your salary?
[Bagaimana Cik membelanjakan pendapatan Cik?]

Who is paying major bills, checking the bank statement and making financial decisions?
[Siapakah yang membayar bil-bil penting, menyemak urusan bank dan membuat sebarang keputusan kewangan?]

** This academic project also wishes to understand the traditional and cultural aspects of women and work.
[Projek akademik ini juga ingin memahami aspek tradisi dan budaya berkenaan tentang wanita dan kerja]

F. TRADITIONAL and CULTURAL INFORMATION
[F. BERKENAAN TRADISI dan BUDAYA]
What your cultural tradition says about working women?
[Apakah pendapat adat tradisi Cik tentang wanita yang bekerja?]

We always hear old folk say that how high the education a woman has, how good her job is she still will end up at the kitchen, so how do you see this statement?
[Kita selalu dengar orang tua cakap setinggi mana sekalipun perempuan itu belajar, betapa baik pekerjaan dia, pasti dia akan ke ceruk dapur jugak pergi, apakah puan dapat katakan dalam hal ini]

In your view, what are the characteristics of an ideal wife and an ideal mother?
[Pada pendapat Cik, apakah kriteria untuk menjadi seorang isteri dan ibu yang ideal?]

Are there pressures to build *"a home rather than a career"* from others (particularly from your boy friend? Your own parents? Your boy friend's parents? Relatives? Neighbours? Society?
[Adakah tekanan untuk membina "sebuah rumahtangga dari berkarier" dari mereka (terutama dari teman lelaki Cik? ibubapa Cik sendiri? Ibubapa teman lelaki Cik? Saudara mara? Jiran tetangga? Masyarakat?]

How do you view a statement *"a woman can't combine a career and family"*?
[Bagaimana Cik dapat memberi pendapat ke atas kenyataan ini "seorang wanita itu tidak dapat menyatukan karier dan keluarga"?]

** Our discussion would not be complete without the information about your Past Academic Experience.
[Perbincangan kita tidak akan sempurna tanpa perkara berkenaan pengalaman akademik Cik yang lepas]

G. PAST ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE
[G. PENGALAMAN AKADEMIK]
How would you describe your interest in Maths and Science during at school?
[Bagaimana dapat Cik nyatakan kecenderungan Cik dalam Matematik dan Sains di sekolah?]

How do you feel about your university experience (did you enjoy it, what was good/bad for you?
• Did you get any career guidance? Was it useful?
[Bagaimana perasaan Cik terhadap pengalaman semasa di universiti (adakah Cik menyukainya, adakah ia baik/buruk bagi Cik? Adakah Cik mendapat bimbingan karier? Adakah ianya berguna?]

Why did you choose engineering course at the university?
• Did you have any problems or difficulties while studying for engineering course? If so, what were they?
[Mengapa Cik memilih kursus kejuruteraan semasa di universiti? Adakah Cik pernah mengalami sebarang masalah atau kesusahan semasa belajar kursus kejuruteraan? Jika pernah, apakah perkara tersebut?]

** We are to talk now about some Influences that you have encountered in your life.
[Kita akan bercakap sekarang berkenaan sebarang Pengaruh yang Cik alami dalam hidup Cik]

H. INFLUENCES
[H. PENGARUH]
<u>Was engineering your ambition since childhood? Why do you say that?</u>
[Adakah menjadi seorang jurutera merupakan cita-cita Cik semenjak kecil lagi? Mengapakah Cik berkata sedemikian?]

<u>Who has the most influence on your work? Is it your mother, your father, your boy friend or others *(Please specifies)*?</u>
• How did she/he encourage you?
[Siapakah yang lebih memberi memberi pengaruh terhadap pilihan karier Cik? Adakah ibu Cik, bapa, teman lelaki atau orang lain? Bagaimanakah beliau memberi kata-kata perangsang tersebut?]

<u>What did you parents think of your career choice?</u>
• How and what people around you (such as relatives, neighbours etc.) said when they knew you have chosen an engineering course as your bachelors degree?
[Apakah pendapat ibubapa Cik terhadap pilihan pilihan karier? Bagaimana dan apakah pendapat mereka di sekeliling Cik (seperti saudara mara, jiran tetangga dsb.) apabila mereka mengetahui yang Cik telah memilih kursus kejuruteraan sebagai ijazah sarjana muda Cik?]

<u>Did your close friends also choose engineering too?</u>
[Adakah kawan wanita Cik turut sama memilih bidang kejuruteraan?]

** A little information of your Family
[Sedikit maklumat tentang Keluarga Cik]
Your Family
[Keluarga Cik]
<u>What is/was the occupations of:</u>
[Apakah pekerjaan:]
1. Your mother
   [Ibu Cik]
2. Your father
   [Bapa Cik]
3. Your siblings (if any)
   [Adik beradik Cik (jika ada)]
4. Your boy friend
   [Teman lelaki Cik]

<u>Is there anybody who is close to you working as an engineer?</u>
[Adakah sesiapa yang kenal rapat dengan Cik bekerja sebagai seorang jurutera?]

** Finally, about the Support you have received.
[Akhirnya, tentang sebarang Sokongan yang telah Cik terima]

I. SUPPORT
[I. SOKONGAN]
<u>Who are the main people you rely on (for practical and emotional support)? How do they support?</u>
[Siapakah mereka yang benar-benar menjadi tempat Cik bergantung harapan (untuk mendapatkan sokongan sejati dan sokongan emosi)? Bagaimana mereka memberi sokongan tersebut?]
<u>Do you feel your career have affected your private life?</u>
[Adakah Cik merasakan komitmen terhadap karier Cik telah menjejaskan kehidupan peribadi Cik?]

** Just to end our discussion, could you please share some Key Moments that you have ever felt or wish to have in your life.
[Untuk menamatkan perbincangan kita, bolehkah Cik berkongsi sebarang Saat Penting yang Cik pernah alami atau yang Cik inginkan dalam hidup Cik]

J. KEY MOMENTS
[J. SAAT PENTING]

What do you think have been the crucial points in your life, which have been important to you?
[Apakah pendapat Cik tentang detik penting dalam hidup Cik?]

Looking back over your life, is there anything you would have done differently?
[Mengimbas kembali kehidupan Cik, adakah Cik ingin lakukan lain dari apa yang telah dilakukan?

What has been the greatest achievement of your life, so far?
[Apakah kejayaan terbesar dalam hidup Cik, setakat ini?]

Thank you very much for your kind involvement and high cooperation in this academic project.
[Terimakasih di atas kesudian Cik terlibat dan bekerjasama di dalam projek akademik ini]

Appendix 4

Interview Guide for Authorities

A. Government Representative

1. Name: Age: Gender: Ethic background: Highest academic qualification
2. Company/ministry: Designation
3. What sort of work do you do?
4. Do you believe that woman and man should be equal to each other?
5. Do you think there is a feeling of superiority on men, in general? (* *This question is for everybody, woman and man. If you are a man, you can still answer this question).*
6. Are you encouraged to conform to the traditional ideas at the workforce? Where these ideas come from?
7. Are sons are treated differently from daughters?
8. What do you think the women should do if the children have grown up?
* *This question is for everybody, woman and man. If you are a man, you still can answer this question*
9. What do you think it means to be a female worker?
10. Have you found that women workers have had problems when it comes to marriage and division of roles?
11. How do women cope with the double stress of work and domestic work?
12. Do you feel that social roles set out for women conflict with the job outside home?
13. Do you feel that being a wife and mother is the central role for a woman? Where these ideas come from?
14. Do you feel that the role of women has changed in the last thirty or so years?
15. Does the Government afraid that women workers will have a bad effect on children?
16. Do you think the Government wants women to continue working?
17. What is the view of the Government towards the childcare?
18. Does the Government think that providing an alternative care or crèches at office/workplace is good idea? Should it be funded by the state?
19. What are the aspirations of the ministry to promote equal footing for women's participation in the workforce?
20. How far does the Government believe women ought to be encouraged to work?
21. Do they have officers delivering family policy in different regions, states and cities?
22. How can your ministry ensure these aspirations succeed?
23. What does the Government see to be the main aim of women and family policy in Malaysian?

B. Engineering Personnel

1. Name: Age: Gender: Ethic background: Highest academic qualification
2. Name of the institution: Department: Designation
3. What would you generally say about the performance of female engineering students?
4. How could you compare the performance of female students in engineering courses?
5. Based from your personal experiences as an engineering student in your university years, did you come across any difficulty whatsoever in engineering subjects and practical training?

Appendix 5

Summation of the Interview Data

A. The Interviews with the Engineers

1   Ethnic distribution

Malay	27
Chinese	1
Indian	1
Indian Muslim	1

2   Age

22	1
23	-
24	5
25	2
26	3
27	3
28	2
29	7
30	2
31	1
32	1
33	-
34	3

3   Marital status

Married	20
Unmarried	10

4   Academic qualification in

Engineering	23
Chemistry	6
Geology	1

5   Place of study

Abroad		19
	UK	11
	US	6
	NZ	1
	Aust	1
Malaysia		11

6.   Level of Education

Bachelors	27
Masters	3

7   Engineering field distribution

Chemical Eng	11
Civil Structure Eng	1
Elect/Electronics Eng	7
Environmental Eng	1
Mechanical Eng	2
Petroleum Eng	1
Chemistry	6
Geology	1

8   Interview sites

East Coast	25
West Coast	5

Personal Profile of the Interviewees
(Interviews with the Engineers)

No.	Name	Ethnic	Age	Degree	University (Country)	Occupation	Income (RM)	Marital Status	Child	Spouse's Occupation (Company)
1.	Alya	Malay	34	BSc Chemistry	Uni of Waikato (New Zealand)	Environment Executive	5000	Married	2	Process Engineer (PetCo)
2.	Bazla	Malay	26	BSc Industrial Chemistry	New South Wales Uni (Australia)	Environment Executive	2500	Single	-	-
3.	Cael	Malay	30	M.EngSc Mechanical Engineering	Oxford University (United Kingdom)	Organisational Improvement Executive	3700	Married	1	Mechanical Engineer (elsewhere)
4.	Damia	Malay	25	M.EngSc Environmental Engineering	Nottingham Uni (United Kingdom)	Environment Executive	2250	Betrothed	-	Environment Engineer (PetCo)
5.	Elnoor	Malay	24	B.Eng Chemical Engineering	Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (Malaysia)	Material and Corrosion Engineer	2250	Betrothed	-	Project Engineer (elsewehere)
6.	Farah	Malay	24	B.Eng Mechanical Engineering	Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (Malaysia)	Material and Corrosion Engineer	2250	Single	-	Mechanical Engineer (PetCo)
7.	Ghusni	Malay	29	B.Eng Chemical Engineering	Universiti Malaya (Malaysia)	Process Engineer	3500	Married	P	Geologist (elsewhere)
8.	Haifa	Malay	29	B.Eng Chemical Engineering	Universiti Malaya (Malaysia)	Safety Engineer	3200	Married	2	Technician (PetCo)
9.	Imani	Malay	34	BSc Geology	University of Alabama (United States)	Head Joint Venture Section	6500	Married	3	Technician (PetCo)
10.	Jaida	Malay	29	B.Eng Electrical Engineering	Universiti Malaya (Malaysia)	Electrical and Instrument Engineer	3500	Married	-	Safety Officer (elsewhere)
11.	Kaisah	Malay	27	B.Eng Electrical Engineering	University of Southampton (United Kingdom)	IT Support Facilities Executive	3500	Married	-	Process Engineer (PetCo)
12.	Lidiya	Malay	26	B.Eng Chemical Engineering	Uni of Southern California (United States)	Process Engineer	3500	Single	-	Process Engineer (PetCo)
13.	Miza	Malay	24	M.EngSc Chemical Engineering	Imperial College (United Kingdom)	Operation Engineer	2250	Married	-	Operation Engineer (elsewhere)
14.	Nayli	Malay	29	B.Eng Electrical and Electronics Engineering	Uni of Manchester (United Kingdom)	Electrical Engineer	3500	Married	1	Electrical Engineer (elsewhere)
15.	Onsun	Malay	28	BSc Applied Chemistry	Uni Institute of Technology Mara (Malaysia)	Chemist	2500	Married	P	Technician (PetCo)
16.	Piah	Malay	29	B.Eng Chemical Engineering	Universiti Malaya (Malaysia)	Integrated Planning Analyst	2250	Betrothed	-	Chemical Engineer (PetCo)
17.	Qamra	Malay	30	B.Eng Electrical Engineering	Uni of Tennessee (United States)	Planning Executive	4001	Married	2	Administrative Executive (elsewhere)
18.	Razan	Chinese	26	BSc Chemistry	Universiti Putra Malaysia (Malaysia)	Chemist	2250	Single	-	Technician (PetCo)
19.	Syaza	Malay	29	B.Eng Civil Structure Engineering	Universiti Sains Malaysia (Malaysia)	Civil Structure Executive	3001	Married	1	Project Manager (elsewhere)
20.	Tijan	IndMus	24	B.Eng Electrical Engineering	Universiti Putra Malaysia (Malaysia)	Control and Instrument Executive	2400	Single	-	Computer Analyst (elsewhere)
21.	Uzma	Malay	24	B.Eng Chemical Engineering	Strathclyde Uni (United Kingdom)	Human Resource Executive	2300	Married	-	Security Engineer (PetCo)

22.	Vel	Malay	31	B.Eng Petroleum Engineering	Colorado School Uni (United States)	Joint Venture Engineer	6001	Married	3	Chemical Engineer (PetCo)
23.	Widyan	Malay	28	B.Eng Electrical Engineering	Uni of Southern California (United States)	System Engineer	3500	Married	2	Process Engineer (PetCo)
24.	Xena	Malay	29	B.Eng Chemical Engineering	Universiti Malaya (Malaysia)	Process Technology Executive	3500	Married	1/P	Aromatics Engineer (PetCo)
25.	Yamni	Malay	25	B.Eng Electrical and Electronic Engineering	Uni of Surrey (United Kingdom)	Instrument Engineer	2500	Married	P	Softwre Engineer (PetCo)
26.	Zunah	Indian	22	B.Eng Chemical Engineering	Uni of Sheffield (United Kingdom)	Research Assistant Executive	2250	Single	-	-
27.	Amni-Bayati	Malay	27	BSc Chemistry	Uni of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology (United Kingdom)	Chemist	3001	Single	-	Geologist (PetCo)
28.	Che-Dania	Malay	32	B.Eng Chemical Engineering	Uni of Birmingham (United Kingdom)	Senior Researcher Executive	5001	Married	2	Army
29.	Ely-Fadwah	Malay	29	B.Eng Chemical Engineering	West Virginia Institute of Technology (United States)	Project Leader Executive	5500	Married	2	Chemical Engineer (elsewhere)
30.	Ghadat-Hidni	Malay	27	BSc Chemistry	Uni of Essex (United Kingdom)	Chemist	2300	Married	1	Assistant Engineer (elsewhere)

B. The Interviews with the Authorities

1 Ethnic distribution
        Malay   4
        Non-Malay   -

2 Gender
        Female   2
        Male   2

3 Job Designation
        Government Officer   1
        Lecturer   3

4 Age
        20s   1
        30s   -
        40s   3

5 Marital status
        Married   3
        Unmarried   1

6 Academic qualification in ·
        Economics   1
        Engineering   3
                Engineering field distribution
                        Elect/Electronics Eng   2
                        Mechanical Eng   1

7	Place of study	
	Abroad	3
	UK	2
	US	1
	Malaysia	1
8	Level of Education	
	Bachelors	1
	Master's	1
	Ph.D.	2

Personal Profile of the Interviewees
(Interviews with the Authorities)

No	Name	Ethnic	Gender	Age	Degree	University (Country)	Occupation	Marital Status	Husband's/Partner's Occupation (Company)	
1.	Rayyan	Malay	Female	Late 40s	BA in Economics	-	Principal Assistant Secretary	Married	Government (Executive level)	Officer
2.	Rais	Malay	Male	Late 40s	PhD in Electrical Engineering	Uni. Of Sheffield (United Kingdom)	Senior Lecturer	Married	Housewife	
3.	Riddeen	Malay	Male	Mid 40s	PhD in Mechanical Engineering	Uni. Of Pennsylvania (United States)	Senior Lecturer	Married	Secondary Teacher	School
4.	Rania	Malay	Female	Late 20s	MSc in Electrical Engineering	Uni. Of Malaya (Malaysia)	Lecturer	Single	·	